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MY GRANDMOTHER'S GUESTS

AND

THEIR TALES.

MY GRANDMOTHER'S GUESTS

AND

THEIR TALES.

BY HENRY SLINGSBY.

"I should be, sir, the merriest here,
But that I have ne'er a story of my own
Worth telling at this time."

The Maid's Tragedy.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE I introduce my 'Grandmother and her Guests' to my readers I feel myself under an indispensable obligation to explain the accidents—for they were purely accidents—by which I became one of the party. I had spent the latter part of the year in the city of Paris, and, in the beginning of November, had set out on my way home, with the intention of passing a merry Christmas in merry England. I went from Paris to Havre-de-Grace, induced by the assurance which I had received from an old acquaintance that there were convenient, safe, and regular packets sailing every day thence to Southampton. I was tired of passing by Calais; I had been the same way so often, and I hated Calais and Dover so cordially, (who does not?) that I was the more glad to try the passage from Havre to Southampton. The result taught me,

MY GRANDMOTHER'S GUESTS

AND

THEIR TALES.

way, there was nobody upon whom to vent one's ire. The morning passed away; and the hope which I still entertained of the speedy arrival of the boat prevented my resolving upon any other means of proceeding to England. At length the agent made his appearance, and pretended to have received intelligence that the Swiftsure had been prevented from sailing from Southampton by some accident, but he was sure she would arrive at night, and sail again the following morning. After the disappointment I had already experienced I did not rely greatly upon this promise, but I thought it would at least be worth while to wait until the evening.

At midnight the Swiftsure arrived. She had

swore solemnly and devoutly, as their feet touched the shore, that nothing in the world should ever again induce them to enter a steam-boat—a vow which, like those made by Catholic sailors in a storm, is, or is not, kept as circumstances may happen to influence the swearer.

The arrival of the boat did not improve my prospect a jot; it was impossible for her to sail again within any reasonable period, because the necessary repairs would occupy several days—perhaps weeks. The skipper of the little coaster, which had brought in the Swiftsure, thought this was an excellent opportunity for him to make some money; so he announced immediately that "the fast-sailing and spacious packet (so he called his dirty little vessel), the Blue-Eyed Maid, would sail for Southampton at six o'clock on the following morning." He promised to carry his passengers across in less time than the steam-boat performed the voyage, and had the modesty only to charge half as much more for the fare. In a moment of desperation I agreed with him—so strong was my desire to reach England. I had no particular reason for this anxiety; but it is a feeling common, I believe, to all men, that, the nearer one approaches home, the stronger becomes its power of attraction; and the difficulties must be great indeed which prevent a man from completing a journey once begun, when its end is his home.

On the following morning I embarked on board the Blue-Eyed Maid; and the little captain, true to his word, set sail at the hour he had promised. I found a company on board small in numbers, but still too large with reference to the capacity of the Blue-Eyed Maid. They had all, I suppose, been induced, as well as myself, though probably for more forcible reasons, to encounter the inconveniences of sailing in so small a vessel, by the hope of reaching England sooner than in any other conveyance. Among these persons there was only one whom I had the honour of knowing. It was Mr. Tims, a very honest, innocent, disagreeable person, who, as he now did me the favour to inform me, had lately,

all his felicity in some place where you could never again set eyes on him.

His person was tall and awkward, his face reasonably ugly and blanket-coloured, his dress at once precise and slovenly, his cravat as large as a table-cloth, and tied on bandage-fashion, looking as if it was intended not for the decoration but the protection of his person, and arranged rather by the hands of his surgeon than his valet. He was, notwithstanding, considered, in the city, as a genteel person; and had a great talent (and to him a very useful one) of making some people believe, by the formality of his manners and the solemn length of his stories, that he had brains in his head.

Tims was of, what the fourth-rate blue stockings would call, a "literary turn." I have even heard that he once wrote poetry, but I am unwilling to believe any thing so injurious to his character, until I shall have better authority for it. Of his love (the ancients called it by another name "more *Scottish* and less nice") for scribbling, I was, however, now destined to endure a sufficient proof. His large leaden eye dilated when he saw me; and, by the unusual alacrity of his manner, I am inclined to believe that he was, as he said, very glad to see me. After the first greetings were over, I saw that his bosom labored with some mighty burden, of which he wanted to deliver himself. I thought he had

been smuggling, and that his uneasy postures and constrained manner were owing to the stuffing of contraband goods with which he had lined his outward habiliments. He looked at me as suspiciously as if I had been a custom-house officer; and I began to fear that he was meditating some proposal to me to fill my boots with gloves, or to put a lace veil into my cravat; or to wear, by way of under waistcoat, some yards of French silk; all of which I had resolved peremptorily to decline. I am no friend to smuggling; and, as I have a great objection to being handled by custom-house officers, I always take care, by not carrying a scrap of smuggled goods, to be in a condition to knock down with-

solent and unfeeling; and, although he was ardently devoted to intellectual pursuits, he had no intention to make literature his profession. He had written a short account in the shape of letters to his wife—Mrs. Tims—a charming woman, to whom he should have great pleasure in introducing me, and so forth.

I began to shudder at the exordium; but as he proceeded I felt the fit increase, and my consternation was at its height when Tims proposed to read his journal to me. What could I do? He was one of the best men in the world, although he was one of the greatest bores. I thought that I might at least let him begin, and trust to some fortunate accident for an interruption which should relieve me. I signified my assent with as much composure as I could assume, and calmly resigned myself to my fate.

"Do you know I have only been away a month?" said Tims.

"Indeed!" I replied.

"Yes, upon my honour, it's a fact," rejoined Tims, in great delight at my supposed surprise; "and I think you will say, when you hear all I have seen, that I have not let the grass grow under my feet."

I could not help ejaculating mentally "I wish the grass were now growing under your feet, or even over your grave, in some pleasant churchyard a hundred miles hence." But my doom was

fixed. Tims produced from his pocket a neat little book, bound in red morocco, with gilt leaves, in which he had written, in a round school-master-like hand, the account of his "Travels in the Netherlands." Sentiment was Tims's *forte*, and his powers of description he believed to be of a superior order. If any body doubts that he was right, I wish them to read the first passage of his "Travels," which is as follows :—

"Started from the Custom-House Stairs at a quarter past nine, A. M. with a cloudless sky, portending fine weather. A bright sun spread his warm and joyous beams around. The rains of the previous day had cleared the atmosphere, and the whole heavens shone propitiously upon us. I had no sooner stepped on the Talbot's deck than the restlessness of change from one element to another ceased : the business of embarking, with all its anxious preparations, was at an end, and I seemed by the transition to be at once absolved from every *earthly* trouble." "You see the pun in the last line," said Tims ; "I think it is rather happy, eh ?"

I bowed assent.

"I like," he continued, "to give an air of lightness, a sort of jocund freshness, to my descriptions, by the introduction of such little sallies."

But the tender parts of Tims's travels were to my thinking the most delightful, or, to use his own phrase, the most "strikingly interesting."

I select the following instance from among many of a similar description; and I should like to see any thing at once equally touching and sportive with this.

Tired of the monotony of sitting on deck, Tims says, "I began to reconnoitre the packet, and first of all went to the lower regions of the 'smoky devil.' (It was not often that Tims went such lengths.) Ah, my dearest Nell, how this brought to my fond memory thy prattling tongue! and various were the incidents now concurring to confirm the words—('If you have tears, prepare to shed them now!')—thou hast so often and so correctly sung—

"Oh! what a row, what a rumpus, and a rioting,
All those endure, you may be sure, who go to sea!"

Tims's description of the steam-engine is vivid, but a little wild: I think he was frightened, for he says the "men were like devils, and the fires like Mount Etna." Poor Tims! I believe he had about as correct a notion of his infernal majesty as of the Sicilian volcano. He returned quickly to the deck; and here occurs a passage which I think one of the happiest in his little volume, and such as could not be paralleled by any thing in Sterne's so often praised "Sentimental Journey."

"I hastened back to a safer element, and sought, between 'the waters above and the waters below,' some one of my own species to

smooth my passage over the dread deep. Upon whom should my searching eye fix itself but Mr. Wiggins, of Pentonville! Time and distance were now happily beguiled. We met as if we had appeared after a joyful resurrection * * * *. How delightful is companionship! how it softens the asperities of a rough journeying through life, and shortens and sweetens the way! The mind, occupied in social converse, loses the taste of those imaginary bitters, and the mind's eye those unwelcome frowns, which fear and suspicion too often produce."

Wiggins's astonishment at seeing the moon rise is told in exquisite style. "At this period," says Tims, "the grand luminary of night arose majestically out of the bed of the ocean. My friend, Mr. Wiggins, who suffered no object to pass his scrutiny, was so struck with its novel appearance as eagerly to inquire its nature and end. He first held it to be a beacon to guide poor mariners on their dubious course; but, as she spread her full red face, intersected with streaks of broken and fleeting clouds, he *conjured* this light of our way into a '*ship on fire*,' to our no small wondering amusement." He must have been a nice man, this same Wiggins, to travel with! but, of all things in the world, I should never have taken him for a *conjurer*. The description of the moon's red-streaked face is not less new than happy.

So far I had endured Tims's travels with tolerable equanimity; but at length a chance, which I can hardly regret, compelled me to break off. He had chronicled, among other things, the effect which the motion of a ship at sea usually produces upon persons not accustomed to it, and had recorded the most minute details of his indisposition. "I felt symptoms, &c." he said, "and accordingly lashed myself to the railing of the deck, secured my head with a nightcap and my hat by a handkerchief, tucked my cloak round my legs, and philosophically dis———." But no! I must not abuse the good nature of my readers in Tims's fashion. It is enough to say, so *lively* was his account of this scene, that, although an old sailor, it produced a very unpleasant effect upon me, and I quitted him abruptly. He made some attempts to renew his *lecture*, but I excused myself.

A slight breeze had brought us out of the port of Havre, but in about an hour it died away to almost nothing, and we made little way. Noon, evening, came on; the sun set, and still Havre was in sight. The complaints against the wind were loud and frequent; and prayers that a breeze would spring up not less so. As the night advanced these wishes were complied with to the letter: a breeze did sprung up, which soon increased to a hard gale; but, unfortunately for us, it blew from the north-east. The sea soon

became rough enough to alarm every body on board; and when the captain told them, without ceremony, that with such a wind it would be impossible to make Southampton, the murmurs of the passengers now increased to downright abuse. In bad French, and worse English, they attacked the captain; and he, although so used to hard words and hard weather as not to mind either of them too much, could not endure this mixture of noise. He got quite out of temper. "Where are we going then, if we are not going to Southampton, captain?" said a fat old man, who had the appearance of a butcher retired from trade, and who, with his wife and daughter, had been making what he called a *tour* on the Continent; "where are

their tongues, why you may all sink together, for I'll be —— if I move a hand!" This appeal had the desired effect; the captain's hearers were all too much frightened, and knew too well how entirely they lay at his mercy, to offer any objection. The ladies hastened into the small cabin, and the men put themselves out of the way as well as they could. The wind continued to blow with unabated violence; but the ship, though small, being taught, and well built for the rough and dangerous channel in which we were sailing, there was little real danger.

The captain, when he had got rid of his importunate and unreasonable passengers, recovered his good temper, and, in answer to my questions, told me we were proceeding rapidly towards the coast of Devonshire; and that, although it was impossible to reach Southampton, he had little doubt that we should be able to land on the following day.

I was not sorry to hear this; because, even though I should run the risk of being thought a coward, I must confess that the prospect of being drowned at sea is not one which I could contemplate with any satisfaction. I know that death will come when it will come, and that it is idle to make faces at it; but, for my own individual taste, I should prefer to meet it any where but at sea. The night of which I am now speaking was one in which it would be as dis-

agreeable to drown as any I ever beheld. The sky was not dark, but black; pitchy—almost palpable—darkness covered us all about. The only light I could see was from the curling tops of the billows as they were lashed by the loud wind, and the blazing sheets of flame which the ship's keel threw off on each side as she ploughed the uneven sea. The dashing of the waves, the hoarse angry voice of the storm, were alone to be heard, and were, indeed, so loud, as to preclude the possibility of any other sounds from being audible. My imagination, excited by the terror and darkness which reigned around me, increased even the actual horror of the scene. As the wind blew with loud boisterous roar over our heads, and screamed and whistled through the

when, soon afterwards, the little town of Sidmouth was in sight, the captain said he could safely land us there.

The passengers now came upon deck; and, when they learnt that they were to go on shore at a distance of one hundred and sixty miles from London, instead of about seventy-five as they had expected, their complaints were renewed; and, as they found there was no immediate danger of drowning, they abused the captain with all the force and variety of which their rhetoric was capable. After the night he had passed their angry reproaches were to his ears as mild as the whispers of evening zephyrs, and he seemed to care just as much for them. I looked about for Tims, intending to suggest to him that this night's adventure would make a glorious finish to his journal—but he was not to be found. I saw something red, which was jammed into the space between the mast and the water-cask on the deck; and, upon drawing it out, I found it was Tims's journal. I now, for the first time, became alarmed respecting him. I asked the captain; but he could tell me nothing about him. I had every part of the vessel searched, but in vain. We were obliged to adopt the conviction that poor Tims had been carried overboard, and that the noise of the storm had prevented us from hearing his cries. I looked upon his journal now with very different feelings; and, as it was

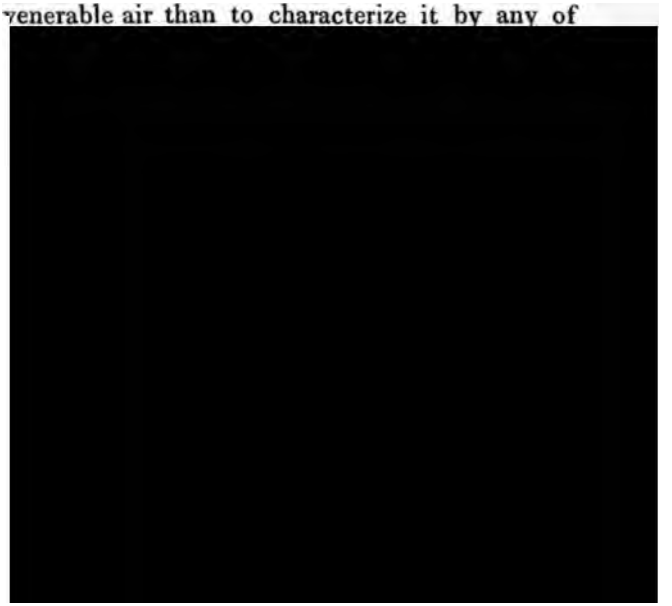
the last memorial of the ill-fated traveller, I carefully dried it, that I might have the melancholy satisfaction of returning it to his disconsolate widow;—a task which I have since performed.

At about noon we reached Sidmouth, and were put ashore to my infinite content. I was not sorry, now that the danger was over, for the chance which had conducted me into this part of the country, because my grandmother lived in the village of Woodville, only five miles distant from Sidmouth; and I had thus an opportunity, of which I was glad to avail myself, of paying a long-promised visit. I put myself, therefore, with as little delay as possible, into a chaise, and, as

to see an odd number at her table. For my own part I enjoyed the quiet and comfort of my present quarters in proportion to the contrast which they presented to the inconvenience and danger in the midst of which I had passed the night; and announced my intention of spending this day and the following at Woodville, after which I resolved to proceed to town.

CHAPTER II.

My grandmother, gentle reader—for I think it high time that you should know something about her—was, at the period of which I speak, just entering her seventieth year. She was of a commanding figure; and the effect which time had produced upon her person was rather to give it a venerable air than to characterize it by any of



other. On the present occasion she had several of them among her guests, and the others were old and valued friends. In describing them I shall begin with the former; and, in the first place, with Elizabeth Mowbray.

She was the only child of the old lady's favorite daughter, who had died in India, and was her grandmother's constant companion. She was just eighteen years of age; her figure was of the most perfect symmetry; and the finished beauty of her face was rendered still more remarkable by the frankness and the girlish simplicity which characterized it. I never yet saw a human countenance in which there was so much of perfect innocence mixed up with so much real beauty. She had been carefully educated by my grandmother; and from this circumstance, or perhaps from that hereditary resemblance which sometimes prevails in the minds as well as in the features of persons of the same blood, she was very much like the old lady in the qualities of her temper and intellect. The freshness and vivacity natural to her youth made of course a striking difference between them, but it was the only one that I could ever discover.

My uncle Hugh was my grandmother's eldest son. He had served for more than five-and-twenty years in the navy, from which he had at length retired; and, having attained the rank of post-captain, had taken up his abode with his mother, to enjoy during the remainder of his life

such repose as the gout and his numerous wounds would allow him. He was as much of a mere seaman as I ever knew. From early childhood he had been attached to his profession, and the dangers and trouble which he had undergone in it only served to endear it to him the more. He had been so long in the habit of contemplating it as the only thing in the world worth the notice of a rational man, that his thoughts and words had all imbibed a marine flavour. Every thing he said or did "suffered a sea-change;" and, ready as he was upon all occasions to defer to my grandmother, and to obey her requests, she could not succeed in prevailing upon him to discard his nautical phrases. When, after repeat-

deck. He had distinguished himself upon many occasions when hard fighting was in request, and had been wounded so often that he used to say he did not think there was a single beam in his hulk of the same material that he had been launched with. He knew nothing of the world, although he had coasted the whole habitable globe; and, if he had been compelled to mingle with general society, he would have been as much at a loss as a South-sea islander. No man was ever so easily imposed upon, or so entirely simple in every thing not connected with his own profession.

Harry Beville stood in the same degree of relationship to my grandmother as Elizabeth and myself. He was the eldest son of a daughter of my grandmother's. His father was an eminent and opulent merchant; and Harry, having begun his education at Harrow, and finished it at Trinity College, Cambridge, was now pursuing the profession of the law. It would, perhaps, be more germain to the matter to say that he was supposed to be pursuing it; for, like all other law students who are not impelled to apply themselves by some real and urgent necessity, his connexion with the law was merely nominal. His father's wealth, and the amount of his own allowance, precluded Harry from feeling any such necessity; and, his taste leading him to very different pursuits, he followed them without hesita-

tion. Still, however, he lived in chambers; and, to keep up appearances, he had several shelves filled with law books, with no part of which, excepting the titles, had he the slightest acquaintance. He made his appearance in hall just often enough to keep his terms; but he was never rash enough to taste the tough meat, and bad wine, which are provided there for the purpose of qualifying men to fill the highest legal offices. He was the pupil of an eminent special pleader, who was supposed to monopolize all the learning in that particular branch of science to which he had devoted himself; and who took only eighteen pupils;—a remarkable instance of moderation, when it is considered that this number was more than six times as many as his chamber could accommodate!

taught it. He found that what was dignified with the name of science was mere chicanery; and that the master of it was a pedant and a sot, whose only merit (if merit it be) was, that he understood the juggling he professed in all its most minute ramifications. The course of his own studies had so much refined his taste and enlarged his mind, that he could not condescend to the drudgery and nonsense of the pursuit to which he was invited, and he therefore left the great special pleader to console himself as well as he might for the loss of his pupil; a matter not so difficult, since he left with him also the fee, with which, by a legal fiction, that learned pundit was supposed to be remunerated for the wisdom he communicated to his scholars.

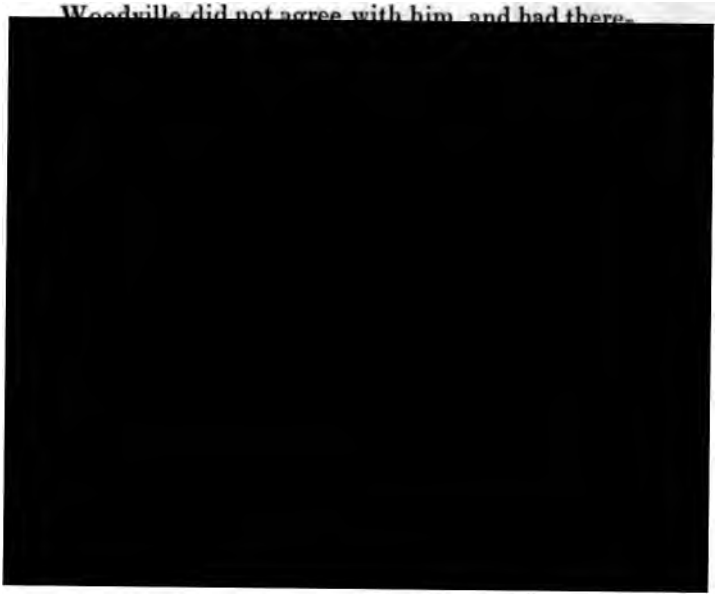
In compliance with the wishes of his father, who thought that every man should have some definite occupation in society, Harry continued to live in chambers, and intended, in the fulness of time, to be called to the bar, although he had shaken hands with the law as a profession for ever.

Upon his return from a hasty tour, which he had made through Italy and part of Germany, he saw Elizabeth for the first time since she had reached womanhood. He was at once captivated by her charms, and proposed to pay his addresses to her, which, after reasonable hesitation, was granted with the consent of my grandmother.

Harry was now in the height of his wooing, and the lapse of a few months was to unite him to Elizabeth for ever.

The persons I have described were such of my own family as composed My Grandmother's Guests on this occasion, with the addition of myself. I have not any thing to say of the latter individual which I think it worth while to trouble the reader with. I do not know much good, and I cannot be expected to say much evil, of him: I will therefore let him pass, and proceed to the other guests.

Mr. Evelyn was the curate of the parish, and discharged its duties in the place of the Rev. Dr. Doublechin, who had found that the air of Woodville did not agree with him, and had there-



necessaries of life at Woodville were always plentiful and cheap, and Mr. Evelyn's wishes did not stray far beyond them. His income enabled him to assist the poverty of some of his needy parishioners; and to add, by occasional purchases, to his library—the only luxury in which he indulged. He was my grandmother's prime minister upon all important occasions; his advice was usually adopted, and his assistance required to put in execution all those charitable labours in which the old lady spent so much of her time and her money.

The apothecary of the village was another of my grandmother's council upon all such occasions, and her guest at present. Mr. Burton was a thin sickly gentleman, who looked more like a patient than a medical man; but he was a very good and useful member of the little community in which he lived, and enjoyed a large share of my grandmother's esteem.

The only person remaining undescribed was Marmaduke Wharton, gentleman, and an attorney of his majesty's Court of King's Bench. He managed my grandmother's property, received her rents, let her farms, and, conducted all the other necessary operations with skill, diligence, and punctuality. He was a perfect jewel of an attorney for honesty and dispatch; but he was in every other respect a great oddity. He had an unconquerable passion for local antiqui-

ties: the vestiges of a supposed Roman camp, a Runic inscription on an old stone, pieces of rusty armour, or even less worthy discoveries of the spoils of antiquity, were objects of as fervent adoration to him as the relics of martyrs to the devotees of the Romish church. He would spend whole days in visiting places which were believed to have been the scene of some feat of olden times. Mr. Burton, who was glad of an opportunity of returning some of the jokes which the attorney was fond of letting off at him, used to say that he was like one of the Seven Sleepers, or like Rip Van Winkle in Geoffry Crayon's story; and that, after having lain for many years entranced, he busied himself, on his awakening, to find out the spots which had

fabulous histories of England, were spread in rich profusion over his shelves. His books were collected as some old ladies collect china—not because it is beautiful or useful, but because it is rare and old. Modern literature he despised, or, at least, disregarded; and I have no doubt, if it were fairly put to him, he would confess that old Stow, and Anthony à Wood, and Thomas Hearne, were, in his estimation, greater men than Chaucer, Shakspeare, and Pope. His very figure was of other times; his dress of a fashion that had been long past; and his whole appearance very much like that of a well-preserved antiquity. Such, gentle readers, were My Grandmother and her Guests.

The old lady was a great lover of story-telling. She had a large collection of the best novels and romances, as well of ancient as of modern times, and was excellently acquainted with the whole history of fiction. My earliest recollection furnishes me with nothing so delightful as her stories; and in many a time of doubt my conduct has been influenced by some precept, some axiomatic truth, which was hidden in the unpresuming tales with which she has fed my childish ears.

After dinner we adjourned to her drawing-room, which was as little like a modern drawing-room as any thing you can imagine. It was a

lofty chamber, wainscoted with oak, which time had made black, and the labours of the stout-armed housemaids had caused to shine with a very reasonable polish. The portrait of my grandfather, in a suit of flowered velvet, with a coal-black peruke, and holding in his hand a scroll, purporting to be a turnpike act, by carrying which in parliament he had gained himself a deathless reputation, hung over the fire-place. Another, representing my grandmother, in the dress of a shepherdess, with a crook in one hand, and the other resting gently on the head of a lamb, while her own head was bent over her shoulder with a truly Arcadian languish, hung at the opposite side of the room. Two antique sofas broke

ful old-fashioned ways, chose to have the tea always made in her presence,) the old lady claimed our attention.

"As every body knows my fondness for hearing stories," said my grandmother, "I shall not attempt any apology for the proposal I am about to make to you. It is, that each of us in turn shall tell a tale. I know there are none of you present who will feel it difficult to do this; and, unless I am very much mistaken, we shall find it as agreeable a method of passing the time as any that can be devised. But, first, let me ask if any one has a better proposal to make."

"You used to be fond of whist, madam," I said, although I knew the old lady never played, excepting when she was, as it were, dragooned into it; but I should have been glad to negative the proposal, which I feared would fall very heavily on me when it should be my turn to comply with it.

"You mistake, indeed," said my grandmother; "I never play at whist, nor at any other game of cards, but to please my neighbour, poor old Mrs. Dunny, who is too deaf to listen to my stories."

"If she were dumb too," said the attorney, "instead of its being, as it would in every other person, an infirmity, it would appear a virtue in her. There is no old woman within twenty miles who propagates more scandal than Mrs. Dunny.

...s she can tell them : they
... ...ver so harmless as yours,
... of veracity, the 'History
... ...mpions of Christendom' is a
... ...pared with them."

"...r. Mr. Wharton, you must not say
... poor Mrs. Dunny," cried my
... ...ter, " or we shall think she is not the
... ...son who spreads scandal. I won't hear
...ing said against her in her absence; nor
... even consent that the 'History of the
...en Champions,' for which I have a profound
...pect, shall be praised at her expense. You
...st not say that behind her back which you
...ould not repeat to her face."

"Is my proposal agreed to, then?" asked the old lady again. "Nobody objects, and therefore I presume every body is content."

"Then we shall have a sort of 'Decameron' in little," said Harry Beville. "What a pity that there are not just ten of us, and that we are not all going to stay here ten days! Oh, if there was but a plague raging in England!"

"I know no greater plague at this moment than yourself, Harry," said my grandmother, "for reminding us of the 'Decameron.' The recollection of that immortal collection — that masterpiece of human wit and ingenuity, which defies, as it ever has defied, all attempts at imitation—fills me with despair. I declare I am afraid now to say another word in favour of my project."

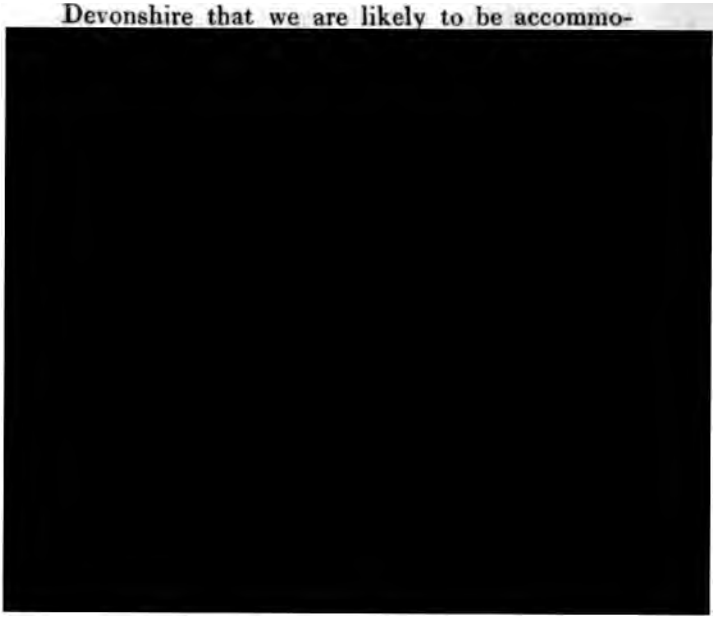
"Since when is it, sir," said Elizabeth, with a provoking gravity, "that you graduated in the ancient and honorable society of Dampers?"

"Really," said Harry, "I beg pardon with the greatest humility: I did not imagine that a simple allusion to Boccaccio—an allusion, too, which, as it seems to me, was perfectly natural—could have had the effect which you attribute to it. I as little thought that it could have frightened my grandmother, as that she or you, or I, or any body here, could think of imitating the great master of modern tales. Not but that I repeat we might make a little 'Decameron' of our

own; I mean a sort of private 'Decameron,' not one which shall go down to posterity, but simply to serve for our own amusement."

"Well, say nothing more of your mischievous *contre tems*, Harry," said my grandmother; "but let us proceed."

"Permit me, my dear madam, for one moment to attempt to set myself right with you. I do think you are unnecessarily wroth with me. It is true that we are deficient in many things to complete our resemblance to the party of Florentine ladies and gentlemen. In the first place there is the plague;—that I confess we have not, nor is it very probable in this salubrious air of Devonshire that we are likely to be accommo-



one manifest advantage on our side;—we are here, and they are no more. Then the place in which our stories are to be told is, it is true, somewhat different, but not therefore to be despised. We do not sit in a pleasant shady meadow, where the sun's beams cannot enter, and where a gentle fresh wind blows; nor can we sit down upon the grass; but your drawing-room, my good grandmother, is better than all the meadows in Arcadia for this weather; your blazing fire an excellent substitute for the sun; and your sofa a better seat than the grass. We do not hear the 'shrill cicala' among the olive-trees; but we hear the chirp of the cricket on the hearth. As far, therefore, as the mere accessaries are concerned, I think we are as well off as the party whom the plague drove from Florence. The resemblance, in other respects, is, perhaps, more close. A proposal has been made by you that each shall tell a tale in turn; and every body is willing *di dire una sua novelletta*. So far, at least—and I did not mean to carry it any farther—I have made out the resemblance; and I hope I have freed myself from the censure which you were, I think, somewhat hasty in passing upon me."

"I was only shocked, my dear Harry," replied my grandmother, "that you should think of comparing our humble efforts with the immortal tales of Boccaccio."

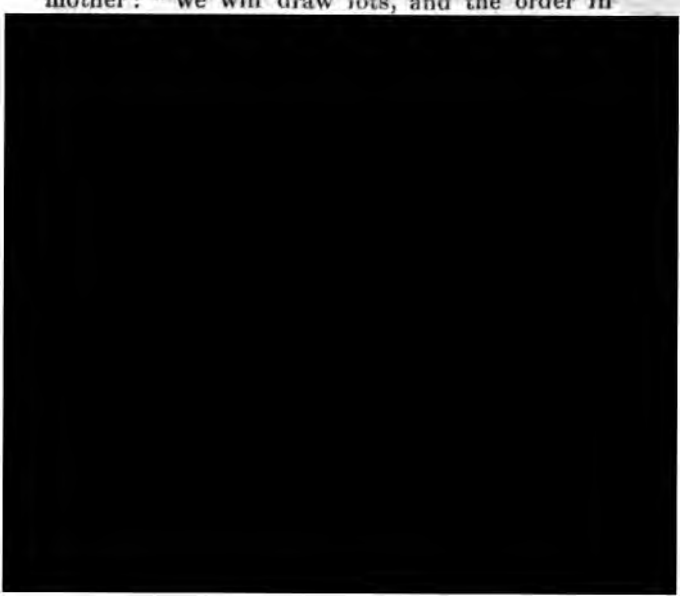
"But no such madness ever entered my head,

I assure you," replied Harry. "To convince you, however, my dear madam, that I bear your reproof in good part, I will now propose that you shall be crowned queen of the evening, and that the story-telling shall proceed under your direction."

"By no means," said my grandmother; "we will have no royal authority on this occasion; ours shall be a republic, and the common voice shall in all cases decide. I will not assume an authority which I might find burdensome to execute."

"How, then, shall we begin?" asked Harry.

"By the decree of Destiny," said my grandmother: "we will draw lots, and the order in



knew no stories; he had no taste for such subjects; his reading had never been sufficiently among works of imagination——

"I think, sir," said Harry Beville, interrupting him, "you showed me a curious copy of the 'History of Matthew Paris,' the other day."

"Yes," said Mr. Wharton, "you may well say a curious copy: there are not three such in the kingdom."

"And pray in what class of writers do you rank him?"

"In that of historians, certainly," said the attorney, with great gravity.

"Then, instead of the story which we have a right to exact from you, I think I may venture to offer, in the name of the company, to let you off for one of the histories, as you call them, of Matthew Paris. If they be histories, I would never wish to read romances any more."

"Well, then," said the attorney, "since needs must be, I shall endeavor to comply with the rule which has been laid down; but without going so far back as Matthew Paris, whom, notwithstanding your sneer, Mr. Beville, I still hold to be the prince of British historians."

"He shall be every thing you like to call him if you will but begin," replied Harry.

"Attend, then," said the old gentleman, "to a story which, although it is not of so remote an antiquity, is not less true than the relations con-

tained in the *Historia Major* of the renowned Monk of St. Albans."

"A solemn intimation, indeed!" cried Harry; "then we must believe it whether it seems feasible or no."

The attorney, without deigning to notice this sceptical insinuation, composed himself in his chair, and began the following tale.

SIR ROGER DE CALVERLEY'S GHOST.

The Lawyer's Tale.

Your fairy, which you say is a harmless fairy, has done little better than played the Jack with us.

———— This thing of darkness
I acknowledge mine. THE TEMPEST.

SIR ROGER DE CALVERLEY'S GHOST.

THE little village of Calverley, about six miles from the town of Leeds, is one of the most beautiful and picturesque that can be found in the west riding of Yorkshire. The whole of the riding may, indeed, challenge competition, for the richness and variety of its scenery, with any place of similar extent in the kingdom; and, among the many charming spots which it contains, Calverley is entitled to the pre-eminence. The road from Leeds to this village is pretty, even now; but, at the time to which this tale relates, it was infinitely more so. Calverley Wood, which the necessities of subsequent proprietors have reduced to very modest dimensions, extended in the seventeenth century for nearly four miles towards the town of Leeds. The river Aire ran through a part of it, and bounded its extremity, where a large wooden bridge was thrown over it.

There is not a child (not to say an old woman) in the neighborhood but knows—and, if you should doubt the fact, will swear—that this wood is haunted by the ghost of Sir Roger de Calverley,* who was pressed to death in the reign of Edward IV. in consequence of his refusing to plead to an indictment against him for murdering two of his children. Some of what lawyers call the "ancient people" have even seen the ghost with their own proper eyes, and all the inhabitants know somebody who has seen it. The story goes, besides, that the hours of the spectre's appearance are between twelve and one o'clock at midnight; and that he will leap behind the traveller as he passes through the wood, and ride

appeared, were in the beginning of the civil wars the property of the Vavasour family. Soon after the commencement of the troubles Sir Ralph Vavasour died, and left the honours and the estates of his ancient house to be supported by his only son.

Sir Edward Vavasour was of a temper wholly unfitted for the times in which it was his lot to live. He had availed himself of all the advantages which his rank and fortune afforded him; and, after being carefully educated at home, had passed several years in France with his maternal relations, who were of one of the first families in that country. His mind was highly cultivated, and all his habits were of that polished and refined kind which can only be acquired by a residence in courts, and the society of enlightened and noble persons. On his return to England he was soon acknowledged to be among the chief ornaments of the British nobility. The king distinguished him by his favour; and the winning suavity of the youthful baronet's manners, added to his accomplishments and personal advantages, made him an universal favorite with the inhabitants of the court.

He had married, shortly before his father's death, the Lady Margaret Butler, a distant relation of the Earl of Newcastle; and this union cemented that intimate friendship which a con-

geniality of taste had already formed between Sir Edward and that gallant nobleman.

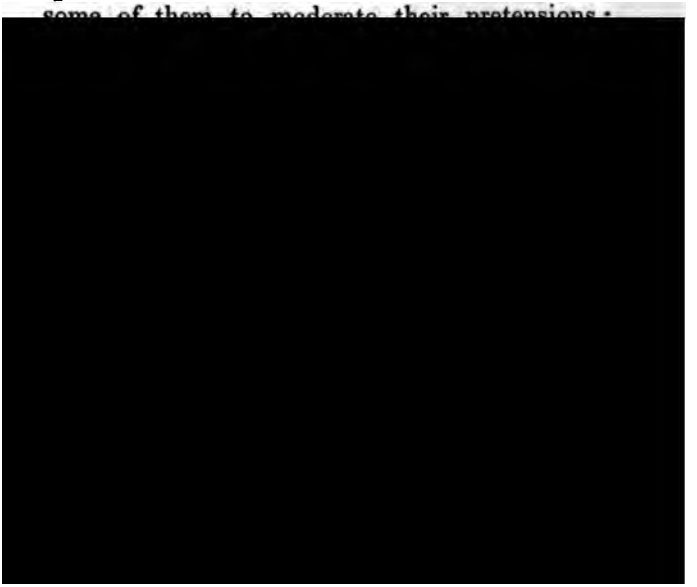
The state of the times obliged him to retire to Yorkshire, as well to take possession of his paternal estates as to repress by his presence some of the disorders which were beginning to manifest themselves. The influence which a landlord then possessed over his tenantry could not be loosened by any very sudden process, because it was the consequence of numerous and almost paternal kindnesses on the part of the superior, which the inferiors duly appreciated; and it was then no less the desire than it must always be the interest of both parties to support each other. Owing to this feeling on the part of his tenants, the district in which Sir Edward resided was comparatively tranquil; and he remained at Calverley for some years, a quiet, but not an indifferent, spectator of the events which took place, and without finding any occasion to take an active part in the contest, which raged around without reaching him.

The pernicious contagion of example did, at length, however, reach Calverley; and Sir Edward saw with great pain that he had no alternative but to take up arms against the parliamentary power, whose object (however just might be the pretences on which they had set out) now seemed to be the establishment of a tyranny at least as

hateful as that of the worst kings. Sir Edward was full of that true and fervent courage which springs from a perfect rectitude of principle and reason, but he was nevertheless reluctant to become a soldier. After the description which has been given of his character, it will be seen that fear (a sensation to which, indeed, he was a total stranger) had no share in causing this disinclination; but it was induced because he felt he could be more usefully, if not more honorably, employed than in making war, and because nothing but the most stern and unyielding necessity could justify the shedding of blood in such a cause as that which now divided the kingdom, and had broken asunder the most holy and kindly bonds of humanity and of society. Driven, however, to adopt a course which he regretted, he was no sooner convinced that it was at once imperative and inevitable than he proceeded to enter upon it with the utmost alacrity. He raised a troop of his own tenantry, and, taking an affectionate leave of his mother, of his beautiful young wife, and of two lovely children, who had been added to crown his matrimonial felicity, he placed himself at the head of his retainers, and joined the standard of his friend, who was now the Marquis of Newcastle.

His activity and skill were of the greatest service to the royal cause, and had the effect of exposing him in proportion to the hatred of the

opposite faction. Military rank was offered to him repeatedly, and was as often refused without the least hesitation. His reply to the king himself, and to his friend the marquis, was always the same. He had joined the army because he felt it was his duty to support the state, which he saw in danger. The post of a mere volunteer afforded him as good an opportunity of discharging this duty as he could look for in a much higher rank, and he felt that a simple command was most consistent with his character as a country gentleman. There were, besides, a sufficient number of aspirants for promotion; and he might, perhaps, have thought that his openly declining to increase the number would teach



not only insisted upon giving the enemy battle, contrary to the opinion and advice of the Marquis of Newcastle; but he persisted in so ungracious a manner, and so entirely took the command out of the hands of the marquis, that, even if the issue had been less disastrous than it was, the latter nobleman never could again have endured to bear arms in a cause which should place him under the orders of the rash German prince.

It is not necessary to detail the course of that unlucky fight, which, after seeming to incline in favour of either side, at length terminated in the total defeat of the king's troops. It is well known that, notwithstanding the discontent for which the Marquis of Newcastle had so much cause, he, and the force under his command, signalized themselves by deeds of the most determined valour; that they bore the whole weight of the enemy's attack; that they more than once turned the tide of the battle; and that, if they had been allowed to follow up the advantages which they had gained, the defeat of the parliamentary forces would have been certain and signal. The rashness of Prince Rupert led him into an absurd pursuit of one division of the enemy; while his envy of the marquis's superior abilities forbade his surrendering to him any part of the direction of the battle. The consequence was that the close of the day found the much larger part of the king's troops irretrievably beaten; and

Prince Rupert then retreated with his horse, and such of the infantry as chose to follow him, within the walls of the city of York. The dead bodies of the Marquis of Newcastle's regiments marked the position which they had taken up in the beginning of the fight, and from which death in its most overwhelming shape had not been able to force them.

The Marquis of Newcastle, his staff, and a few of his officers, who, being well mounted, were able to accompany him, retreated also to York when the face of the fight had become so desperate that to stay any longer was wholly unavailing. Sir Edward Vavasour fell early in the action; the most painful search was made for his body on the following day, by the orders of the Marquis

loved too well to witness its falling a prey to the ruin which must necessarily ensue. He withdrew with the small number of his adherents who remained; and, escorted by a single troop of horse, he went to Scarborough, where he embarked on board a ship of his own, and sailed for Hamburgh.

The affliction of the family at Calverley may be better imagined than described at the news of the defeat at Marston Moor, and the death of Sir Edward. All the ordinary forms of mourning were adopted; search was made, as we have already said, for the body of the baronet; and this proving unsuccessful, the old Lady Vavasour, who was a woman of uncommon energy, and whose conduct had secured for her the respect even of such of her neighbours as had espoused the opposite party, procured, without much difficulty, permission for herself, her daughter-in-law, the children, and her servants, to repair to Hull, where she had engaged a vessel to carry her to France, her native country.

It now becomes necessary to impart a secret, which, if the Roundheads had been acquainted with, would have thwarted the dowager lady's plans, and somewhat have frustrated the events of this history. Sir Edward Vavasour was not dead. It is true that he had fallen at Marston; and it is no less true that nothing would have induced him to quit the field alive, if he had been in a situation to act for himself.

At the moment, however, that he fell, a gentleman who was devotedly attached to him, and who had always an unlucky habit of interfering in the concerns of other people, happened to be close by him. This was Sir William D'Avenant, who, from having been, in the 'piping times of peace,' merely an idle courtier and poet, had now become a soldier of some renown; and, being an adherent and retainer of the marquis, he was intrusted with a nominally important command, which somebody else executed for him. He loved Sir Edward with the warmest and most disinterested affection; they were sworn brothers: in their less busy times they had capped verses at court, and once clubbed a masque at a royal entertainment. The knight's duty ought

mauling all the parliamentarians who came within his reach with true poetical fervour, bestowing along with each blow some quaint imprecation or odd nickname upon his adversary, to the great amusement of the soldiers near him, with all of whom he was a great favorite. Not one of the rogues that he smote but he had a jest or a sarcasm for; and he had been cracking skulls and jokes until his strength and his wit were considerably impaired. The conviction that the day was decidedly going against his party came at the same moment that he found himself making a short blow and a bad pun. At this instant, too, he saw his friend Sir Edward go down from a blow dealt to him by a rawboned butcher of Tadcaster, who was a captain in the parliamentary army.

"Knave!" he cried, as he spurred his horse against this ruffian, "thou shalt no more shed the blood of man nor of beast!" and, rising in his stirrups, he cleft the savage giant's head nearly asunder, and brought him down to the ground. "Thus," he continued, "do I revenge my friend, and many a score of honest sheep and oxen."

At this moment a vigorous charge drove back the enemy; and Sir William, whose courage, now that his friend was not able to back it with his example, began to flag, and, like Acres', to "ooze out at his fingers' ends," thought it was an admirable opportunity to return to York, and to

carry the prostrate Sir Edward with him, where his wounds might be tended, if indeed (which he very much doubted) medical skill could avail them.

With the assistance of an old soldier, of whose life this was the last kind action, (for a random shot from a Roundhead blacksmith's petronel sent him soon afterwards into the kingdom of the ghosts,) he placed Sir Edward, now nearly insensible, before him on his horse, and set off at a round pace towards York. He soon found, however, that it was hopeless to attempt to reach the city, for a party of the enemy's horse lay before him. To his still greater mortification he saw that he was observed by them: turning, therefore, his horse's head round, he spurred

The baronet was too much exhausted with the pain of his wounds and the loss of blood to answer at any length; but he contrived to express his opinion, that, if by any means they could reach Calverley, it would be better to do so, since all hopes of returning to York were cut off.

"Zounds!" cried the knight, "that's easier talked of than done, my dear Sir Edward. Poor Hamlet, here, whom I so named in honour of my godfather, Shakspeare, and because his black hide looks in as deep mourning as the Danish prince's suit of sables, is blowing like a smith's forge. What sayest thou, lad?" he continued, apostrophizing the steed, and patting his neck, "canst thou carry us a dozen miles before supper-time? Thoult try, I warrant."

He walked by the horse's side for some time, until the animal had pretty well recovered his wind; and, then mounting him again, they proceeded at a sharp pace by a cross road, which Sir Edward was able to describe to his companion, in the direction of Calverley.

Within about five miles of Calverley Sir William perceived a man before him, mounted on a stout gelding. To accost him he knew was dangerous; but to pass him without doing so might engender suspicions, which could scarcely be less injurious in his present condition. He therefore boldly rode up, and civilly saluted him.

"Whither goest thou, friend?" asked the stranger, in the snuffling tone adopted by the Puritans of that day.

Sir William found that the stranger, though not drunk, was what is courteously called "rather disguised in liquor:" he also knew instantly of what description of person he must be, and that he had every thing to fear from him if he should discover who he was. He therefore replied that he was a clothier going to Leeds, and that his companion, who rode before him, had been thrown from his own horse, and was so much hurt that he could not keep his saddle without assistance.

"Art thou a friend to the cause?" asked the stranger.

Fighting Cocks, about a mile hence, thou shalt produce it before me, that mine eyes may see the truth of thy ways."

"Willingly," said Sir William; "but I prithee, sir, tell me who it is that this dark night has brought me acquainted with."

"I am Ananias Fats," replied the other, "an unworthy servant of the Lord: I minister the word of the Most High, and fight his battles with the arm of flesh when need is, seeing that I am, besides, a captain of Hewson's regiment."

"We must cut his throat," whispered Sir William to his companion. "Art thou that holy man," he added aloud, and with a conventicle twang—"art thou he, whose pious exhortations do arouse the lost people, and whose speech stirs up their sleeping zeal, even as the trumpet rouseth the war-horse?"

"Yea, verily, I am that unworthy vessel," replied Brother Fats.

"And how do thy labours prosper?" asked Sir William in a similar tone. "Do the people of this land hearken unto thy council, and give ear to thy pious inspirations?"

"Deaf! deaf!" replied the other, who thought he had fallen in with one of his own stamp. "Were it not that the arm of flesh is strong, and that I can smite those who will not be persuaded, this place would be little better than a howling wilderness. Lo! there are many who

do shut up their ears and close their understandings against the council of my lips."

"Ignorant and deluded people! But they are of the baser and more brutish class, I must believe."

"Not always, for there is a stiff-necked generation even among those who have horses and chariots, and whose treasuries are filled with silver and brass."

"Alas! alas! who are such blind and deaf wretches? who are they that, like the adder, are deaf to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely?"

"There be many such, my brother; and, among others, there is the malignant Lady Vavasour."

been told by Brother Goggle, a goodly dwelling; and the cook is a man cunning in his art, and much skilled in the science of the flesh-pots of Egypt. I shall tarry there, for it is the duty of the saints to feed upon the substance of the unrighteous."

While the communicative Ananias, under the influence of certain potations of ale, was telling his new acquaintance what he meant to do, the latter held a short colloquy in whispers with the baronet. The result of their conference was very soon put into practice. Sir William pulled up his horse, and alighted under the pretence that he had cast a shoe. Ananias checked his beast also; and, before he had time to say a word, he found himself unhorsed and prostrate, with his false friend's knee on his breast, and his pistol at his throat.

"If you speak or stir, you Roundhead villain," cried Sir William, "this moment is your last. Now, where is the commission you told me of?"

Ananias was one of those amiable men who are never fond of fighting, although they often talk of it; and he was not so drunk but that he knew two men against one were odds, particularly when the one man is on the broad of his back, with a loaded pistol only half an inch from his throat.

"Spare my life, gentle cavalier," said the prostrate Puritan. "Let me live, and you shall have all I possess."

"If you had as many lives as are in Plutarch

I would not spare one of them, unless, in the first place, you give me the commission," repeated Sir William. "Where is it, thou wicked Ananias?"

"In my saddle-bags," replied Ananias.

"Clap them on our horse, Sir Edward," said the knight to his companion, who, notwithstanding his weakness, had alighted, and now immediately transferred the bags to Hamlet's back.

"And now," said Sir William to the Puritan, "if I should spare thy forfeit life, and give thee another chance with the old one to save thy soul, wilt thou take thyself away from this neighborhood? for I swear to thee, upon the word of one that hates all Puritans as much as he hates

sword," he said, as he loosened the sword-belt of the elder, and handed the weapon to Sir Edward; "and I think, too," he added, "I will have thee change clothes with me."

He loosed his grasp a little, and helped the Roundhead to rise, but still kept his pistol near enough to make an impression on him.

"Now, then," he said, "unfrock, and speedily! 'It is a naughty night to swim in,' but thou must strip. Be quick, Ananias; thou wert never before honored with such a *valet de chambre*. Come, thy cloak and band, and the rest of the sheep's clothing in which thou dost ensconce thy wolf's body. Come quickly!" and he added a blow with the flat side of his sword, to quicken the tardy operations of the elder, who, with many wry faces and great reluctance, did his bidding.

Sir William then transferred his pistol to Sir Edward, with a particular request that, if the Puritan evinced the least symptoms of treachery or refractoriness, he would be so obliging as to shoot him through the head without hesitation or ceremony.

Sir Edward promised; and the knight stripped off his own uniform with great dispatch, making Ananias put it on, while he assumed his garb.

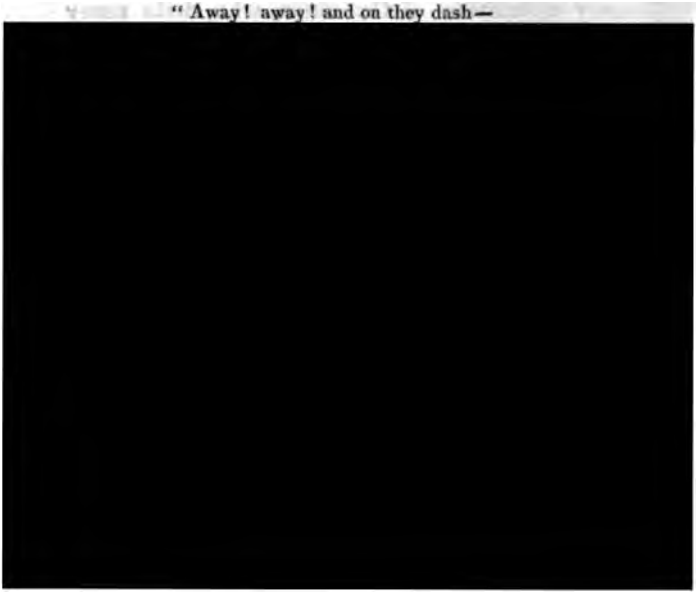
When the exchange was completed, Sir William pinioned Ananias's arms, and helped him upon his horse; after which he tied his legs very effectually beneath the animal's belly.

He then went to the road-side, and, cutting up a stout thistle, he carefully tied it under the tail of the elder's steed.

"There!" he said, "Ananias; as I have prevented thee from smiting thy charger's sides with thy spurs, I have provided for thy rapid journey by putting a goad to his tail; and, as the beast looks to have mettle, I warrant that he will not shortly slacken his pace."

As he finished speaking he gave the horse a smart blow, at which he set off in a gallop; and the incessant motion of the thistle, which at every bound struck against his flanks, soon increased his pace, to the terror of Ananias, who went off like Mazeppa on his wild horse.

"Away! away! and on they dash—



of a cobbler to become a corporal in Cromwell's regiment. Ananias and he had been companions in wickedness from their boyhood upward, and had both taken to the thriving trade of hypocrisy just at that time when every body who knew them predicted that the gallows must be their inevitable fate. They had both been poachers and deer-stealers: Tribulation had a habit of squinting, and was always reckoned a crack shot by night, or at other improper and unseasonable times; but his skill was never advantageous to the rest of the world, excepting on this occasion. When he examined, by the fire-light, the face of his prey, he was astonished to find his old friend Ananias, and still more so to see him bound hand and foot, and in the uniform of the Marquis of Newcastle's regiment. He was, however, sure that there was a mistake in some quarter or other; and, to put an end to any needless inquiries, which might turn out unpleasantly for himself, he, with the assistance of his comrades, dug a hasty grave, in which the carcass and the memory of Ananias Fats were buried together.

Sir William D'Avenant knew nothing—and, if he had, he would have cared as little—about the rogue he had thus sent headlong to meet his fate. Sir Edward—who, faint and exhausted as he was, had not been able to refrain from laughter at the manner in which D'Avenant had stripped

the Puritan, and then dismissed him—now asked his friend what he purposed doing.

"I do intend, with your honour's permission," he replied, "to present myself at Calverley Hall in the venerable character of Ananias Fats. It would be something dangerous, as well to the good ladies there as to our own insignificant throats, to appear in our proper persons at this juncture: I propose, therefore, to go first, and sound the place; after which I will return to you, and effect your entry. Do you approve of this?"

"Do as you will—your ingenuity and discretion are the best qualities in the world to rely upon in danger; and, just now, I am really so much exhausted that I am wholly incapable of any exertion."

gentle Will Shakspeare had held me over the font, I might have escaped so beggarly a lot; but, hang Care! I would not exchange such a sponsor for a better—even if the world ever saw a better, which I doubt."

They now approached Calverley Hall, and, by Sir Edward's directions, rode through the park to a small summer-house, which stood at the end of the garden. Here the poet assisted his friend to alight; and, having bestowed him safely upon a couch, he turned his horse into the carriage road, and trotted up at a smart pace to the great entrance. After rapping for some time with the butt-end of his pistol at the door, he heard steps proceeding along the spacious hall; and soon afterwards a small wicket in the door was opened, and he saw the white head of old Gervase, the butler, peeping through it.

"How now? who knocks here at this time o'night?" was asked from within.

"Verily, one of the brethren, who seeketh to commune with the Lady Vavasour," replied the knight, in the tone of the character he had assumed.

"Then, my brother, you must come to-morrow," replied the servant with an ill-tempered scorn, which raised him highly in Sir William's opinion. "My lady sees neither brother nor sister to-night."

"Man, thou art uncivil," said Sir William;

"I have General Fairfax's commission to enter this dwelling."

"This is not General Fairfax's house, but my master's, Sir Edward Vavasour; and, unless you have his commission, you enter not here." A good deal of grumbling about "crop-eared canting thieves" followed, which was not quite distinct.

"Do you then resist? and must I use force?"

"You must do just as you like, only I tell you that I have a firelock here; and Ralph, the gardener, has gotten another, which he'll fire from the other side of the house when he hears mine; and, this pitch dark night, we can neither of us tell one o' the brethren, as you call yourself, from a housebreaker; so, unless thy hide be bullet-

face, man;" and he held his candle up to the wicket.

"Lord love your honour, I know you by your nose," cried Gervase, as he hastened to undo the heavy fastenings of the door, and to admit Sir William.

In a few words the knight explained to him the necessity there was for keeping Sir Edward's arrival secret, lest, as he feared, after the defeat at Marston, the whole country should fall into the hands of the parliamentarians, and in that case his life would be hardly safe. For this purpose he told the butler that he intended to keep up the character of the Puritan whose clothes he wore; and that, with the exception of himself and the ladies, he wished no one in the house to know him but as Brother Ananias Fats. He then bade him accompany him to the little pavilion, whence they carried Sir Edward into the house unperceived, most of the servants being at this time in bed. Sir William, after having seen Hamlet safely stabled, desired to be announced to the ladies.

Their anxiety to know the result of a battle, in which Sir Edward was certain to be engaged, had prevented them from retiring to rest; and, although it was now near midnight, and of course long past the hour at which even ladies of quality in those times sought their pillows, the Ladies Vavasour were still up. The dowager

lady was employed in working at a tapestry frame, in which she was assisted by a pretty black-eyed girl, an attendant, somewhat above the degree of a servant. The Lady Margaret had been reading aloud the Countess of Pembroke's 'Arcadia,' and was just arriving at the termination of the tragic story of Argalus and Parthenia.

The progress towards a perfection of style, which our language has made since the period when this delightful romance was written, prevents us in a great measure from relishing the quaintness of its expressions; but, in spite of this disadvantage, it would be impossible to deny to it as a whole, and to this episode in particular, the possession of very powerful pathos.

The Lady Veressour had read the account of

there fell about the shoulders of the overcome knight the treasure of faire golden haire, which, with the face (soone known by the badge of excellency), witnessed that it was Parthenia, the unfortunately vertuous wife of Argalus; her beauty then, even in despight of the passed sorrow or comming death, assuring all beholders that it was nothing short of perfection. For her exceeding faire eyes having, with continuall weeping, gotten a little rednes about them; her roundy sweetly-swelling lips a little trembling, as though they kisst their neighbour Death; in her cheeks the whitenesse, striving by little and little to get upon the rosinesse of them; her neck (a neck, indeed, of alabaster) displaying the wound, which, with most dainty bloud, laboured to drown his own beauties; so, as here was a river of purest red, there an iland of perfittest white, each giving lustre to the other, with the sweet countenance (God knows) full of an unaffected languishing. Though these things to a grossly conceiving sense might seem disgracious, yet, indeed, were they but apparelling beauty in a new fashion, which (all looking upon through the spectacles of pity) did even increase the lines of her natural fairnesse; so as Amphialus was astonished with grief, compassion, and shame, detesting his fortune, that made him unfortunate in victory."

This tale had excited abundance of tears from

the two ladies, whose anxiety for Sir Edward's fate made them full of sympathy for the fabled woes of the personages of the romance; while the black-eyed Dorothy—whose heart had yet experienced so few sorrows of its own that her tears were always ready to start for those of others, either real or imaginary—wept until she could hardly see her needle.

This melancholy party was disturbed by the entrance of Gervase, who announced Master Ananias Fats, to the astonishment, and displeasure of the ladies. They could not conceive what had induced the butler to depart from the ceremonious respect with which he usually approached them, and more particularly in favour of a man bearing such a name.

There was, however, no time to chide, for Ananias entered close upon Gervase's heel, and, with the insolent awkwardness which distinguished the Puritans of the time, he advanced towards the old lady, keeping his hat on, and saluting her in no other way than with a long drawling sigh, partaking somewhat of the mixed nature of a groan and a snuffle.

The old lady drew herself up with all the dignity she could command; and, if looks had the power to slay, hers would have pierced the pseudo Ananias through and through.

Sir William, however, looked at her without changing the affected gravity of his countenance.

"Sister," he said, "if thou art she whom men call the Lady Vavasour, I would speak with thee."

"I am the dowager Lady Vavasour."

"Hum! Dismiss the maiden."

"I can have no conversation with thee which she as well as all the rest of my household may not hear."

"Sister, be not obstinate;—again I say unto thee, dismiss the maiden."

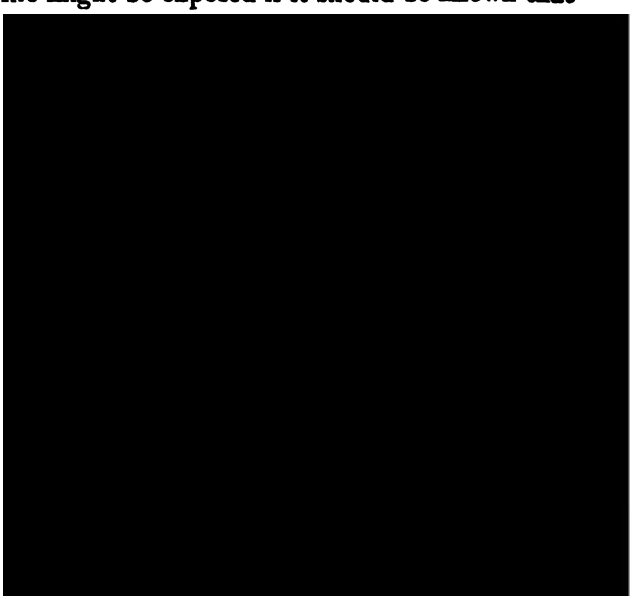
"I have no other reply to make to your insolence but to request you will speedily do your errand, (unwelcome, whatever it may be,) and that you relieve me from this intrusion."

"Sister, thou art—a woman." He added, in a lower tone, "*Il faut qu'elle nous quitte; les nouvelles dont je suis chargés ne sont que pour vous et Madame.*"

The old lady was more astonished than ever at hearing the Puritan speak in French. She saw immediately that there must be some mystery; and now she could account for the abruptness of the entrance of Gervase, who, she did not doubt, was acquainted with it. She therefore told Dorothy, whose large black eyes were rolling about in utter astonishment, to retire.

As soon as the girl was gone Sir William untied the string of his high-crowned hat, and, his hair falling about his shoulders, he appeared in his own shape—that of an old and valued acquaintance. He related the fatal event of the

fight at Marston; the destruction of the Marquis of Newcastle's regiments; the ill fortune of Sir Edward; and shortly touched upon the manner of his escape. This recital, short as it was, was interrupted by the anxious inquiries of the tender and affectionate Lady Margaret, who, when she learnt that her husband was in the house, insisted on being led to him instantly. Sir William moderated her impatience as well as he could; he assured her that Sir Edward was in no danger, although his wounds would render him incapable of any exertion for several days to come: but that which had the most weight with her was his representation of the peril to which her husband's life might be exposed if it should be known that



a month: he was able to take exercise at night in the grounds and in the adjoining wood, and the days were passed in the most agreeable manner. His wounds, which their numbers alone rendered formidable, were nearly well; and he now began to think what steps should be taken for the future. To stay in England seemed useless to the king's cause, and dangerous not only to himself, but to those who were far dearer to him than himself. The example the Marquis of Newcastle had set him of quitting the kingdom, which, if he had been alone, he would not have followed, now seemed the best course for him to pursue, and to this the persuasions of his mother and his wife also strongly inclined him. The dissensions, and, as it sometimes appeared to him, the devoted follies of the royal party, were hardly less disgusting than the falsehood and villainy of the parliament. At length he resolved to adopt this measure. The news of his death had long been received at Calverley, and was universally believed by all but those who were in the secret. The servants had been all put into mourning, and preparations made for the departure of the ladies and the children to France. Permission was obtained without much difficulty, because the prospect of so fat a sequestration as the estate at Calverley was too enticing to permit the members of the council to throw any obstacle in the way of it.

Sir William D'Avenant liked so well the cha-

racter of the Puritan that he continued to keep it up, and he had even the audacity to travel to Hull under the name of Fats, notwithstanding the possibility which he believed might exist of his meeting the real owner of that dignified appellation. Our readers know that such a possibility was, to say the least, a very remote one; but Sir William, who was not so sure of that fact, had resolved, in case he should meet him, to outface the brother; and he did not doubt that, after a whole fortnight's practice, he should be enabled to beat him even at his own weapons.

He went to Hull for the purpose of engaging a vessel to carry the Lady Vavasour and her household to France, and had the good fortune to light upon an honest fellow who commanded a smug-

hold himself ready for sea as soon as he should receive orders. Gamblers and smugglers and thieves are all honorable men, and scrupulously observant of their promises when it suits their interest to be so: of such men it may be truly said that their words are better than their bonds; and as, in this instance, Master Roger Blurt could get nothing by breaking his engagement, he stood to it like a stout fellow.

Upon Sir William's return to Calverley the preparations for the removal were set about with the greatest diligence; and, in the course of a very few days, the chief part of what was intended to be taken away was carried down to Hull. The other arrangements were also completed, and it was settled that at the close of the day the ladies should depart in a carriage, under the escort of old Gervase and another servant, and accompanied by Brother Ananias, who had condescendingly promised to see them embark.

A livery suit had been provided for Sir Edward exactly like that of the servant who was to attend the carriage with Gervase; and it had been settled that he should make the first part of the journey in the carriage, and that the party should not set out until late in the day, in order to shun observation. They were to cross the bridge at the end of Calverley Wood, and then to take a road by which they should avoid the town of Leeds, where the greatest, or rather the only,

danger awaited them. After travelling all night, the servant, a trusty lad, the son of one of Sir Edward's tenants, was to be dismissed, and the baronet to take his character and his place. Relays had been provided on the road, and the whole journey was to be made without stopping any longer than might be wholly unavoidable.

No plan could have been more cleverly arranged; but it is the fate of all human plans to be subject to accidents, which traverse and baffle them. As poor Burns sung,

> "The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
> Gang aft a-gley;"

and those of the junto at Calverley were not exempt from this common lot.

greater; but they thought of their return, and this mitigated their regret at being compelled to depart.

Sir William D'Avenant, whose cheerfulness and vivacity were never to be subdued, drew a glowing picture of the delight with which they would greet Calverley when a short residence abroad had made them duly appreciate its beauties, which he said they were far from doing at present.—Then he talked of France, whither they were going; he described the gaiety and brilliancy of the French court, until he even made the gentle Lady Margaret think it might be as well to see it. He spoke to the old lady of the stately dignity and decorous etiquette which prevailed there—of the respect with which the aristocracy was treated by the people—until she believed that, if she could come back when she liked, she should have pleasure in visiting again a country which she had not seen since her childhood, and which was the native land of her ancestors. He praised the chivalrous and gallant spirit of the youth of France, and talked of the superior refinement and grace which pervaded the higher orders of the nation, until the baronet was persuaded that it was better to live in France, until quiet should be restored to England, than to stay losing his time and his labour in fighting the Roundheads. Sir William had even made Dorothy, who was sitting in a bay window, think that there was nothing so dreadful in

going to France, when Gervase entered with a look of considerable alarm, and put an end to his harangue.

"Away, away, your honour, to your hiding-place! Here's a troop of the cursed Club men coming up the avenue, and God knows what may be their purpose."

In a moment the baronet retired to his chamber: the entrance was carefully closed, and the party had resumed their places, when the leader of the party, whom Gervase had descried, entered the room in which they were sitting.

This man was well known to the Lady Vavasour, and to all the household. He was by trade a miller, and lived at a short distance from Leeds.

not care which side they plundered, so that they did but plunder.

The qualifications of Sampson Ryder could not be overlooked in such a society; he soon procured a command, and was the dread of the whole county. The inhabitants of Calverley had long expected to suffer from his attacks; but he had kept aloof from them in a very singular manner, and had, on all occasions, shown an inclination to be as civil as the brutality of his nature would allow of. Rascal as he was, he could not but remember that the late Sir Ralph's intercession alone had saved him from the gallows: the old baronet had, besides, been a kind and considerate landlord to Sampson and his father, and he could not quite bring his mind to the commission of any outrage on the Calverley family. His coming on the present occasion was not of his own choice, but in consequence of an order from Fairfax, who had sent him to see the house cleared, and had given him, besides, particular directions to take care that no persons should accompany the ladies but such as had already received permission. This injunction was rather the result of that jealous policy which the general always pursued than of any suspicion that the suite of the Calverley family would contain any of the royalist fugitives; and of the existence of Sir Edward he had not the most distant notion. Ryder had also been directed to leave a guard at the hall,

and to place the rest of his men at a barrier called Bradford Gate, about a quarter of a mile from the side of the bridge nearest to Calverley. This barrier had been strengthened in order to prevent any hostile approach, of which Fairfax said he had received some intimation.

Sampson Ryder, upon his entrance, made a bow, in which his mingled arrogance and awkwardness were displayed in a very amusing manner. He then advanced to the old lady, and, with an air which partook of trembling as well as swaggering, he told her that part of his errand which related to her own departure. The good old lady made no reply; but, thinking that at this critical moment the example of those Catholics who offer

Sir William, in his assumed character, regaled him, but neither seemed to understand nor to care for it, busying himself in the mean time with long and frequent draughts out of a blackjack well filled with ale, and cutting enormous slices from a piece of cold beef which stood beside it. He, however, found leisure in the mean time to explain to the supposed elder, at greater length than he had communicated to the lady, the exact tenour of his order from Fairfax.

Sir William was greatly perplexed at this untoward event, which, as it seemed, must necessarily overturn all the plans they had formed for Sir Edward's escape, and would even place him in great danger of falling into the hands of the enemy. The time was fast approaching at which the departure of the ladies and their suite was to take place; and the person of Sir Edward was so well known to Ryder, and perhaps to many of his troop, that it would be madness to think that any such disguise as they were furnished with could effectually conceal him. There was not a moment to lose, and Sir William was absolutely at his wits' end for a scheme to rescue his friend from the perilous plight in which he was now placed.

He quitted the room for the purpose of holding a short council with the ladies, when, as he crossed the passage, he met Dorothy, the waiting-maid.

"What shall we do, sir?" cried the poor girl, who had been weeping heartily, for she thought that her master's discovery was certain: "it will be impossible to deceive that brute Ryder and his wicked companions. I wish, with all my heart, that one of the ghosts he is so much afraid of would carry him away."

"What ghosts? Dorothy," asked Sir William.

"Oh, sir, he believes in all manner of ghosts, and is as much afraid of them as a little child at a nursery tale."

"Is he, indeed?" exclaimed Sir William, who saw through this hint an assailable point in the Club man, on which he thought he might make a successful attack. "You are quite sure of this, Dorothy?"

"Quite sure, your honour; why he believes that Calverley Wood is haunted by Sir Roger's ghost to this day."

"That is the only respectable part of his character that I have yet been able to discover," replied Sir William, as he hastened back to the room in which he had left the Roundhead.

He again attempted to engage the miller in conversation; and, thanks to the ale which the latter had drunk, he did so with a little better success.

"Brother," said Sir William with a deep groan, and at the same moment turning up his eyes until nothing but the white of them was to be seen—

" brother, we live in dreadful times! Not only does the wickedness of man vex the righteous of the land, but the great enemy himself roams about unchained among us!"

At the moment when Sir William had began to speak Ryder had stuck a large piece of bread, wedge-shaped, and weighing a quarter of a pound, into his enormous mouth; and, such was the impression made upon him by the knight's speech, that he sate with his mouth and eyes wide open, and the bread fixed as if it was never to move again. Sir William saw he had made a hit, and went on.

" Yea, my brother, the devil himself is come amongst us, and roars and roams about, seeking whom he may devour."

" The Lord preserve us!" ejaculated Ryder, as soon as he had extricated the crust from his ponderous jaws, " dost mean that th' oud one himself is on earth?"

" As surely he is, my brother, as that thou and I are sinners—and, what is more, he has become a cavalier, and has taken the king's side."

" Why how do'st know, man," cried Ryder, who trembled in every joint.

" Has not the news reached thee, then?" asked Sir William, affecting some surprise: " hast thou not heard of this malignant enemy, whom men call Prince Rupert?"

" No, only that he 's a Jarman prince without

land or money, and that he comes here to fight for so much of ours as ever he can get."

"He is the devil's prime agent, and works by the assistance of hell, to the discomfort of the saints."

"Oh Lord!" exclaimed the Club man.

"Did you ever see him?" asked the knight.

"Yes," replied Ryder.

"Well, and did you not think he looked as if he dealt with the devil?"

"I think he has a wild kind of an outlandish look."

"The fires of hell burn in his eyes; he sits in his quarters reading at night without a candle. And did you ever see the great black dog which

were not really a fiend, would soon have made an end of him; when suddenly this black dog burst in among them, and, taking the prince up in his mouth, threw him, as easily as a fox would throw a turkey, across his back, and carried him off. The soldiers of Cromwell's troop say they struck at the dog repeatedly, but their swords either fell short or sounded upon his black hide like hammers upon an anvil, and made as little impression. He carried his burden off safely; and, in less than five minutes, the prince was mounted again, and renewed the charge."

"Oh Lord, oh Lord!" cried Ryder, as he wiped away the large drops which terror had wrung from his forehead, "what is to become of the holy cause if our enemies have the aid of Satan? I fear no man alive, be he prince or Jarman, or cavalier, or what not; but I can't fight Old Scratch."

"Trust to thy own righteous acts, and the prayers of the saints."

"Pray for me then, holy Sir, for I had rather trust to thy prayers than my own righteousness; of which, sinner as I am, it becomes me not to speak."

For once in his life Sampson Ryder told the truth. Sir William saw that he had gained a certain ascendency over him, which he believed would be quite enough for his purpose. His chief object now was to prevent the departure of the

miller before night-fall, when he trusted that he should be able, by some means or other, to secure Sir Edward's passage through the barrier, which was guarded by Ryder's men. He, therefore, continued to invent a thousand other lies, all as frightful as that of Prince Rupert and his black dog, and all concerning the devil in person, until he found he had the miller completely in his hands.

The day had now nearly closed in, and Ryder was impatient to depart, telling his reverend friend plainly that he did not like to ride through Calverley Wood after dark if he could avoid it.

"But in my company," said the supposed Ananias, "what can you have to fear? I defy

would do all in his power to ensure the escape of Sir Edward; and he had already done so much that she could not doubt his zeal or his ability. He begged her, besides, to pursue her journey, without stopping, to the first stage, which had been previously fixed upon, and which was about twelve miles off. This being arranged, he went into the chamber of Sir Edward, to whom he explained all that he had gathered from the Club man.

"There is nothing," he said, "to be done with this ruffian but by frightening him; I advise you, therefore, to steal out by the garden-gate, and make the best of your way to the wood. We must needs pass through it in our way from this place. I will contrive so that Ryder shall be my *compagnon de voyage*, and shall have much mistook my man if I do not make him aid our project in some way or other. I mean to frighten him with the old story about Sir Roger de Calverley; do you take care to be near the road, and contrive by some signal to let me know you are within hearing; you must then keep very close to us: you will know the miller by his white coat; he rides a very stout gelding, which can carry two for a few miles as well as need be. When I shall say 'Loup on' for the third time, you must jump up behind the miller, and spur his horse as hard as you can, while you gripe him tightly. If the worst comes to the worst, and the villain should not be so much frightened as I reckon

upon, you must put a stop to his resistance by killing him; but, as the county is full of his friends, this would, at all events, be dangerous, and I hope will not be necessary. If, however, it should, you must do any thing but shoot him, for that will make a noise, and ruin all. Now God be with you!" he said, squeezing his friend's hand: "away to the garden-gate; keep near the path in the wood; and remember, the third time that I shall say 'Loup on,' you must be *en croupe*."

Sir William then returned to his companion, whom he found recovered from his panic, and giving directions to his men. Five of them Ryder ordered to remain at Calverley Hall, to take

The fellow made an ugly bow, by which he meant to express that he understood, and should obey, his commander's bidding; and then mounting, he got his company into such order as they were capable of, and set off at a quick pace towards the gate alluded to. The carriage was soon afterwards brought round to the hall-door, and every thing was ready for departure. The two ladies bade farewell to the ancient building in which they had both enjoyed so much happiness, and with abundance of tears, which were rather shed for the peril in which they knew Sir Edward to stand than because they were about to quit Calverley, they began their journey.

Ryder would now have set off also; but the worthy and reverend elder, drawing him back by the arm into the hall in which they had before been sitting, told him he had a word or two for his private ear. When they entered he pointed to a seat; and, taking one himself, "My brother," he said, "these benighted sinners, dark as they are in the ways of their own conceit, have nevertheless certain worldly knowledge, which the truly righteous—such as thou and I, brother—need not disdain to profit by. During my sojourn here I have discovered that within these walls there is a small parcel of a curious and ancient wine; a wine indeed so ancient that it ought not to tarry longer without drinking, and it can never be better drunk than at the present moment."

Ryder was afraid of spirits—but not of wine; he had already drunk enough to give him an inclination for drinking more, and he needed little pressing to fall into the proposition. The reverend Ananias went to a cupboard in the hall, and produced from its recesses two cobwebbed long-necked flasks, the tops of which were covered with that faded green wax which is a thousand times more delightful to the eye of a real connoisseur than the *ærugo* that covers the rarest coins of antiquarian treasure.

The Club man, although he had never seen such things before, had an instinctive veneration for bottles like these; and "the divinity that stirred within them" exercised its influence even over

drink, and declared he was willing to fight up to his knees in the blood of cavaliers for such a beverage. Sir William encouraged this temper; and, by the fascinations of his conversation, which he possessed the rare and valuable faculty of adapting to the characters of various persons, he kept Ryder talking and drinking with him until the night had completely set in, and the Club man, though not absolutely drunk, was reasonably stupid.

Brother Ananias now pretended to be in a great hurry to depart, and threw out some obscure hints of having been directed by high authority to watch the Calverley family to the coast, by which insinuations he increased his own importance in the mind of his besotted companion, and effectually avoided suspicion. The horses were ordered; and the travellers mounting, Ryder upon his own gelding, and Ananias upon a stout hackney belonging to Sir Edward, they manfully took the road.

As soon as they were at a short distance from the hall the false Puritan began to lead the discourse towards the subject of supernatural appearances. This was much to the vexation and discomfort of Sampson, who did not, however, like to show his terror, or to affront the worthy gentleman who had introduced him to a sample of such Burgundy as had induced him to form the pious resolve of returning on the following

day to Calverley, for the purpose of appropriating to himself all that he could find in the cellars.*

Sir William went on, therefore, unchecked in his stories about ghosts and devils, and brought the discourse, by an easy transition, from goblins in general to that which was universally believed to haunt Calverley Wood. "You know, of course," he said to his companion, "the history of Sir Roger de Calverley."

"Oh, yes," replied Ryder eagerly, in the hope that his acquiescence might have the effect of diverting the conversation from this topic.

Sir William looked narrowly around him, for they had now arrived at the thickest part of the wood, through which their path lay. He perceived a figure behind him, which he immediately guessed to be that of Sir Edward: he waved his hand, unseen by his companion, and saw that his signal was returned: satisfied on this point, he resumed the subject of the ghost.

"Then," he said, "if you know the history of Sir Roger de Calverley, you know all about *Loup on.*"

* We must state here, for the satisfaction of our readers, that when, at a subsequent period, he did venture upon this design, he was miserably thwarted; for all the doors of the choicest cellars had been so carefully bricked up, that, not, being in possession of the private marks, by which alone they could be discovered, he was unable to find them, and the wine remained safe in its hiding-place.

"No, I don't," said Ryder, whose curiosity was as great as his superstition.

"No!" exclaimed Ananias in seeming surprise: "then I must tell you that Sir Roger de Calverley was, as you are aware, some centuries ago, the possessor of this estate. He was a brave and generous man; had served gallantly in the wars abroad; and lived afterwards on his own patrimony, as an English knight should do, making himself and his tenantry happy and contented. He was married to a lady who was as beautiful and good as he was brave and honest; and for some years they lived in uninterrupted felicity. They had three children, who added to their happiness; and, if experience did not daily show us that it is the lot of mortality to have bitterness mingled in their sweetest draughts, it should have seemed that this couple were beyond the reach of misfortune. A storm of misery was, however, about to burst over their heads, and to involve them in ruin."

"Well, I know the whole story," cried Ryder, with a little of impatience in his tone.

"No, you do not," replied Ananias; "let me proceed, for the best part of it is in the sequel. Sir Roger had one fault, and a grievous one it was; but it was one which often accompanies the best natures. He was inconceivably jealous; and, although the virtue and propriety of his wife had hitherto given him no reason to indulge in it, he

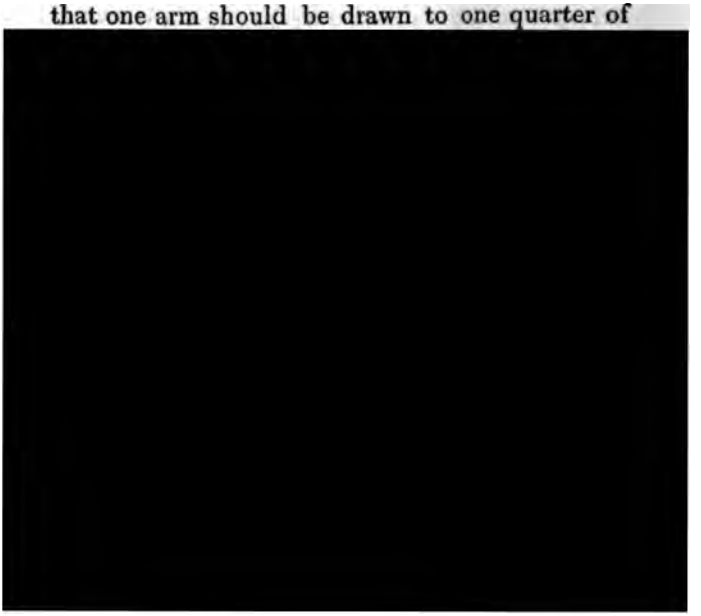
was himself aware that, if it once should take possession of his bosom, he should not be able to control it. It sometimes happens that the dread one has of doing any particular thing leads one to do it; and so it was in this instance. This does not happen, it is true, to sound minds; but very passionate minds are never very sound ones. From constantly thinking of jealousy, Sir Roger became jealous, and watched his innocent and light-hearted wife with an intenseness which was of itself an evident mark of insanity. A spark was only necessary to cause the explosion of the fierce contents of his heart; and, by her ill fortune, his wife furnished this. One day, at dinner, the fond father was caressing one of his children, while he

one of the knives on the table, he plunged it into the bosom of the child he had been caressing the moment before. The mother, horror-stricken, caught the other child in her arms, and fled away: Sir Roger followed her; and, as she entered her chamber, tore the infant from her arms, and it soon fell another victim to his blind fury. The lady threw herself under the bed which stood in the room; but even this retreat afforded her no shelter from the madness of her husband. He drew his sword, with which he thrust at her several times; and, at length, believing he had dispatched her, he went down to the stables and saddled a horse, for the purpose of finishing the extermination of his family by the slaughter of his eldest son, then at a school about ten miles distant. An old servant of the house, who had witnessed, but could not prevent, these horrors, rode off at the same time; and, passing his master on the road, arrived at the school in time to give notice of his intention, and to save the child. Sir Roger was immediately apprehended, and carried to London; when he was brought to trial for the murder of his children. Upon being arraigned he refused to plead, and was, therefore, condemned to the dreadful sufferance of the *peine forte et dure*. Do you know what that is?"

"Not exactly," replied Ryder.

"Why, then," said Sir William, "it is this: when a prisoner, arraigned of a felony, refuses to an-

swer to his arraignment, the Court orders 'that he be remanded to the prison from whence he came, and put into a low dark chamber, and there laid upon his back on the floor—naked, unless where decency forbids; that there be placed upon his body as great a weight of iron as he could bear—and more; that he have no sustenance, save only, on the first day, three morsels of the worst bread; and, on the second day, three draughts of standing water that should be nearest to the prison-door; and that he should not eat on the same day that he drank, nor drink on the same day that he ate; and that he should be without any litter or other thing under him; and that one arm should be drawn to one quarter of



sides which, if he had been convicted, (and there could be no doubt that he would have been,) his lands would have been forfeit to the king, and his heir a beggar: to avoid this, therefore, he remained mute, and was treated in the manner I have described to you. Being a man of prodigious strength, and able to bear great fatigue, it was several days before a period was put to his sufferings: at length, worn out by the acuteness of his pain, and by the tardiness with which Death approached him, he called out, after being silent ever since his apprehension, 'If there be a Yorkshireman in the room, for the love of Christ, let him *loup on*;' meaning that he should thereby increase the weight on his breast, and put an end to his misery."

"Well, mon," said Ryder, who had been listening to hear some new incident in the story which he had not known before, "all this I had heard sin' I were as high as a cabbage-stalk."

"But have you heard, also," said Sir William, who had now got to that part of the wood which he judged fittest for his purpose, and which was near the end of it—"have you heard, also, that the ghost of Sir Roger still haunts this wood?"

"'Marcy's sake, don't talk so hollow," stammered the Club man, while his teeth rattled audibly together: "don't ye talk about the ghosts at all," he added, whispering, "for how can'st tell who be listening to thee?"

"Fear naught," replied Sir William, "but here it is that his ghost does really walk—here in this very wood; and I have heard many a traveller say that he has seen him—nay, more, that he sometimes mounts behind them, and gallops with them to the river, where he quits them; for the spirits of hell, you know, cannot cross a running stream. The only danger, besides the fright, from such a visitation, is, lest the traveller should be induced to break silence: then the ghost would have power to dash him from his saddle, and perhaps to kill him."

"I wish to my heart that we were upon the bridge," said Ryder, whose terrors increased notwithstanding all his efforts to control them.

terror and intoxication, was perfectly incapable of exertion, much less of resistance. The horse, either terrified at the supernatural load which he bore, or, as our readers, whom we have been compelled to let into the secret, may think was the more likely, influenced by the spurs of the new comer, set off at a smart gallop, which soon brought them (for Sir William kept up at the same speed) to the gate where Ryder's men were posted. The night was dark; but the Club men, who were on guard, knew their leader's white coat, and, expecting the elder to be in his company, they did not offer to stop the travellers, and merely uttered a surly "Good night."

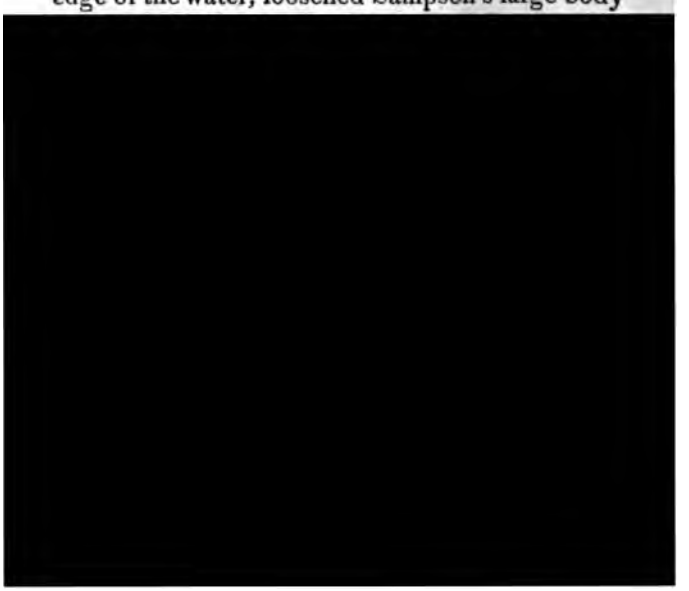
"The captain is riding his old pace to-night," said one of the Roundheads.

"He rides as if the devil were behind him," said another.

"Belike he is," said the first; "and I wish he may stick to 'un:" for the captain was not too much beloved in his own troop. They then closed the gate.

In the mean time the travellers kept on at speed. Ryder was more than half-inclined to cry out as he passed the gate; but the caution of the elder came across him, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. Trembling with fear, and almost sinking from the rough grasp of the demon who held him, he saw with delight that they were approaching the bridge. It was a rude

wooden structure, with a rail on one side only. The stream beneath was rapid, but not very deep. "Now," thought the frightened Club man, "these horrors will have an end;" but he was again deceived; his horse's fore feet thundered upon the bridge; and at the same moment a loud and dreadful voice roared in his ear "Loup off!" He could bear no more; his strength and his senses yielded at this last blow, as dreadful as it was unexpected; the hot breath of the fiend behind seemed to have blasted his very soul; and he sunk powerless into the arms of his tormentor. The latter, shifting the hold he had upon him, and checking the horse as he directed it nearer to the edge of the water, loosened Sampson's large body



Half an hour's riding brought them within sight of the place where the carriage had stopped. Sir Edward now dismounted, and turned loose the Club man's horse, which was tolerably blown: he then proceeded on foot to the little inn, where he found his mother and his wife, and relieved them from the agony of suspense in which they had been until assured of his safety. The horses were brought out: Sir Edward mounted in his capacity of servant, and Sir William took his place in the carriage. They proceeded without delay towards Hull, which place they reached without any further accident; and, immediately embarking on board the boat which Sir William had engaged, were landed, after a prosperous voyage of two days, at the port of Boulogne, and found a refuge in the chateau of the elder Lady Vavasour's brother until the Restoration enabled them to return to Calverley.

Ryder, on getting out of the river, made the best of his way back to the guard at the gate, and with the assistance of his men was put to bed, when his fright and his ducking soon brought on a fever, which would perhaps have killed him, but that the lives of such people seem always to be charmed. When he recovered he told the story of his being assailed in the wood by the ghost of old Sir Roger, who mounted behind his horse. He made some trifling additions in his own favour; such as that when they came

to the river he threw himself into it, to escape from the ghost; and that he saw the demon seize the elder, Ananias Fats, and vanish with him in a cloud of fire and smoke. He told this so often that he at length believed it himself; and, as the reverend Brother Fats was never afterwards heard of, there was nobody to contradict him. To this day nothing is more religiously believed by the inhabitants of the neighborhood than that old Sir Roger's ghost haunts Calverley Wood, and will leap on the crupper of any traveller who shall be rash enough to pass it between midnight and cock-crowing.

When the attorney had finished there were various opinions respecting the merit of his story.

My grandmother said she expected to have had a real ghost, and that she loved a real ghost of all things.

Elizabeth said there was no love in it, and that a story without love was good for nothing in the world.

Many other things were said, and still more would have been said, but that it was suggested that the apothecary, to whom the second lot had fallen, ought now to begin his tale.

The apothecary was a tall thin gentlemanly person, of about the age of fifty. He was certainly the thinnest man that I ever remember to have seen in the enjoyment of health.* His life had been of that restless unsatisfactory descrip-

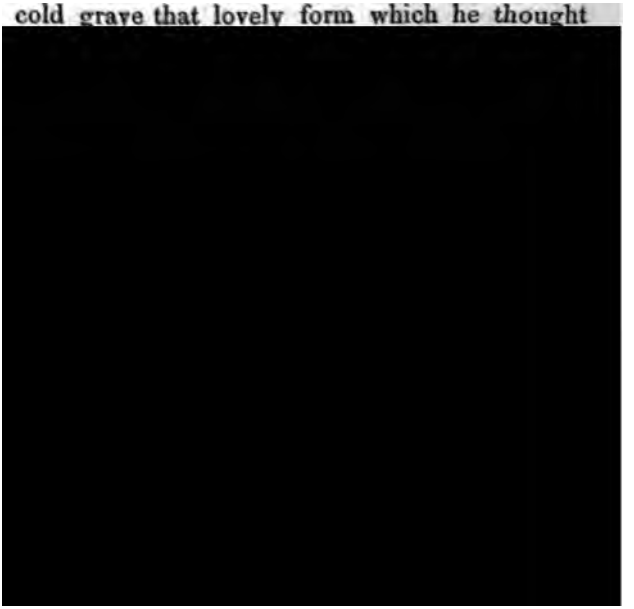
* The attorney, who (although an attorney) was a great wag in his way, used to tell a story about the poor Doctor's spare figure, which he thought was a masterpiece of fun. Divested of all the ornaments with which the attorney's fancy had decked it, the tale was that a country fellow who came to fetch the apothecary to attend his wife was shown into a room, and requested to wait there until the doctor should be disengaged. It happened that in the same room stood a wooden case, in which was a skeleton; and the lout, with that curious disposition which is not uncommon

tion which makes a man wise at the expense of almost all the comforts which people in general think are best worth living for. At the death of his father, which happened before his twentieth year, he received a very slender fortune: this was soon dissipated in the necessary expenses of his profession, and the unnecessary, but, to young and inexperienced medical students, unavoidable expenses of living in London; and, when he had completed his studies and examinations, and had procured a license from the worshipful company of Apothecaries and the Royal College of Surgeons to kill on his own account, he made the agreeable discovery that he might exclaim, with Jaffier, "Now am I not worth a ducat."

wholly without fortune; but this consideration was no bar to the arrangements of the lovers for their future happiness, while he thought that he possessed sufficient, at least, to begin the world. The conviction of his own poverty, however, caused the young man to see the affair in a different light. He could bear personal privations, but he could not endure that the woman whom he loved far better than himself should be exposed to the inconveniences and hardships which he, with too much reason, dreaded might attend their marriage. I think he was mistaken—and I think that every man who should act in the same way under similar circumstances would be mistaken. It is more like timidity than delicacy to shrink from such dangers; and it is unwise to expect that there can be any felicity in this world beneath which sorrow or danger does not lurk. "'Tis dangerous," as Hotspur has it, "to take a cold, to sleep, to drink; but, out of this nettle, danger, we pluck the flower, safety." The poor fellow, however, was very young, and this is all that can be said for it: he bade his weeping love farewell, and went to the East Indies to seek fortune by a short cut. Like many other persons, who take short cuts, he missed the road; and, at the end of four years, returned to his native village not much more rich, but a great deal wiser, than he had left it.

His absence had caused more unhappiness to

his Lucy than all the fancied misfortunes he had dreaded could have brought with them in their worst shapes. Anxiety, and "hope delayed, which maketh the heart sick," and the want of that fond and faithful bosom on which the poor girl had always before relied, and where all her fears and doubts had been wont to find rest and consolation, had preyed upon a constitution naturally delicate. Mental sorrow had induced corporeal disease, and a consumption had preyed upon her heart like a canker-worm in a rose; while her beauty became even more striking and touching than before. A very few weeks after his arrival, it was his misery to yield up to the cold grave that lovely form which he thought



absence of twenty years, he had got rid of that melancholy which oppressed him before, and a placid cheerfulness had taken its place. He practised his profession rather for the sake of having something to do than in the hope of profit, of which he had no need, his fortunes having improved in his travels so much as to have ensured him a moderate competence. He administered his assistance to such as required it, and was paid, upon the average, by about one patient in ten. He had not, I believe, much money to give away; but he did more good than many richer men, in assuaging the misery of the poor people around him.

He was a great favorite with all our *coterie*, and particularly with my grandmother: she pitied his sufferings, of the details of which I believe she knew more than any other person; and she loved him, besides, for the gentleness of his manners and goodness of his heart, and—because he could tell stories. He would sometimes describe to us the countries he had visited; and I remember I thought the horrors he related were worth all that I heard besides. He was a great hand at describing a tiger-hunt; and the glories of the nabob's courts, at several of which he had been, beat the Arabian Nights hollow in my mind. The tale which he had now to tell was, however, of a more quiet kind; and he began without delay.

HOURS OF PERIL.

The Apothecary's Tale.

——— Thou shalt tell
How thou escaped'st the watch.
ANTONIO AND MELLIDA.

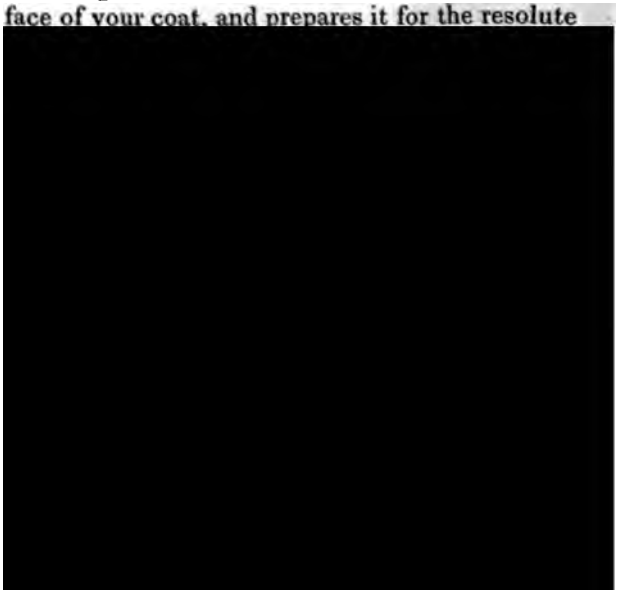
HOURS OF PERIL.

I WAS on my way from Calais to Paris; and, as I fancied that I was in great haste to arrive at the latter city, I resolved to encounter the weather, although it looked with rather a threatening aspect upon me, and the month of October had just begun. It did not fall within my plans to travel post; and, if I chose, I could give you a thousand reasons for it, all of which your good breeding must make you at least *seem* to believe. I prefer, however, to tell the truth; and, without sheltering myself behind the ordinary excuses of the incivility of postilions and the *ennui* of travelling alone, I tell you fairly that the cheapness of the *Diligence* prices mainly recommended it to me. The weather was gloomy; but M. le Conducteur was persuasive, and I listened with a too-yielding credulity (which amiable facility of my temper has led me into many a scrape

before) to his oaths and promises "that it would not, could not, and should not, rain for the forty-eight hours next to ensue." So, like a gull as I was, I consented to occupy the only vacant seat *(sur l'imperiale)* of the top of the diligence, which, for my sins, had no *calêche*.

But there is no faith in man—if ever there was, it has flown away, with a multitude of other good things, to Heaven;—even a conducteur cannot be trusted; for all the assertions of him under whose guidance it was now my fortune to journey were faithless.

Soon after leaving Montreuil, where we dined, it began to rain, and continued in that mild insinuating manner which softens the external surface of your coat, and prepares it for the resolute



parapluie,) he chanted one and the same song—I saw him buy it in the morning at Calais—the burden of which was

"Dis donc, trompeur, t'en souviens tu?"

I got angry with the rain—tired with the song—sorry that I, too, had not a pipe—and still more sorry that I had taken so exposed a seat. The prospect of passing several more hours in the same situation was as gloomy as the night itself; and I knew, besides, that I could not do so with safety as regarded my health.

"This"—said I to myself, in the tone and temper of a man who has done a silly thing, and has no one else to blame for it—"this comes of your wise economy, and your no less wise haste. I never knew any body in such a hurry to save their time and their money who did not eventually manage to lose both."

To quarrel with myself, I recollected, could do no good; so I resolved, *imprimis,* not to be ill tempered, and, in the next place, to stop at the first house of entertainment where a bed, or at least a shelter, could be obtained.

In half an hour after I had formed my determination I found we were entering the old city of Abbeville, the pointed gables and tall roofs of whose houses were dimly seen by the street lamps, of which there were about three in a quarter of a mile. The post here is, luckily, also an inn; and I resolved to shelter myself

under the Toison D'or, instead of sleeping *à la signe de la Lune*, even if there had been a moon, which there was not.

When I announced this determination to M. le Conducteur I saw that I had lowered myself in his estimation: he thought me before, as he said, *un bon enfant*—one who did not care for the rain. He was sorry to lose my company, for we had been great friends. It was not often (he did me the honour to say) that he met a gentleman who could so well appreciate the enthusiasm with which he told the story of his campaigns, which he did exactly three times in every week to any one who would listen to him. He believed I too was a *militaire*; "and you know, monsieur," said he, "*ce qui se ressemble se recherche comme*

This room was already occupied by a French gentleman, who, upon mine hostess's intimation that I was wet, and that there was no other fire then lighted, with the politeness common to his countrymen, requested I would do him the favour to share his apartment with him. I am not so slow as some men in making acquaintances; I found M. Montmorin a well-bred and sensible gentleman, full of information, willing to impart it, and able to do so in a very agreeable manner: we wasted no time, therefore, in looking shy and sulky at each other, but were more intimate, and less reserved, in five minutes, than some Englishmen, who still have a great esteem for each other, would have been in twice as many years.

It is true I discovered also that my companion was a medical man, but I believe there is no free-masonry in physic; at all events I am sure it did not help our intimacy a jot, for we talked very little about it, and, as if by mutual consent, all physic was, on this occasion, "thrown to the dogs."

We sat for some hours chatting, discussing the supper, and a bottle of excellent Burgundy—egad, I think we emptied three—until we thought it expedient to retire to our bed-rooms. Among other topics, on which we talked, the French revolution was, of course, not forgotten; and M. Montmorin gave me an account of his own escape during that reign of terror, which, it will

be confessed, was so perilous, that he might be justified in calling it one of the most interesting events of his life. I shall repeat it as nearly as I can in his own words :—

" At the beginning of the French revolution," he said, " I was a student of surgery in the first class at the Anatomical College of Paris: my family lived in a distant province, and I had come to the metropolis, as other young men of similar pursuits did, first to acquire the knowledge necessary for practising the medical profession, and then to push my fortune in it as well as I should be able.

" The events of the revolution rendered Paris, dangerous as it was, a safer place for me than any other in France: and I thought I should

"I was one day quitting the college, when I was met by one of the *Sœurs de la Charité*, by whom my fame had been a good deal spread among such folks as needed her aid and mine.

"Sister Bathilde was a pious, clever, indefatigable, ugly old woman, who went about to the houses of the lowest members of the community, nursing and praying with the sick, and soliciting the charity of good Christians for such as were in need of it. She had long distinguished me with her especial patronage, because she found that I was always ready to attend her calls, having, indeed, no other occupation, and being led by a zeal natural enough to a young man. She now besought me to visit with her instantly one of her unfortunate clients; and, without waiting to give me particulars, led me to the more remote end of the Rue St. Honoré, where, after turning down a long passage, we ascended a staircase, and stopped only when we reached the sixth story. Sister Bathilde knocked at the door; but, receiving no answer, she opened it, and ushered me into a room which presented a deplorable scene of misery and want. I was tolerably well acquainted with the wretchedness which dwelt in the garrets of Paris; and, although I had never beheld any scene of greater horror than was now before me, I was not so much surprised at it as many other persons might have been.

"On a wretched bed on the floor lay the

corpse of an old man, whose emaciated figure and rigid features made him look like the personification of Famine. A young woman, clothed in scanty rags, lay across the body in a fainting fit. It was impossible, notwithstanding the horror of the scene, not to be struck with the elegance of the female's figure: it was rather above the middle size, and seemed to me, who am in the habit of looking at human forms with a critical eye, to be a specimen of the most faultless symmetry that Nature ever formed. Her face could not be seen, for it was buried in the bosom of the corpse; and her long black tresses hung down her half-covered shoulder.

"'Blessed virgin!' cried Sister Bathilde, 'they are both dead!'

"I approached the bodies, and, discovering that the female was alive, removed her to another pallet, even more miserable than that which bore the dead body, and, by the application of such remedies as I had about me, speedily restored her to existence, though not to a consciousness of her situation. She was suffering under a typhus fever in its most alarming stage, and, as soon as she was able to breathe freely, broke out into a fit of the most frightful delirium. The poor sister, terrified, but not deterred from the duties of her pious office, continued to weep and to tremble, while she repeated prayers as fast as she dropped tears.

"At my request she procured the assistance of the occupants of the apartment below, who were only one degree less poor than those above them; and they readily assisted to take charge of the furious maniac, while I went to procure medicines, and to provide for the removal of the dead body. The latter is an affair speedily performed in Paris, and was decently accomplished before I returned with the potion, which had so happy an effect that the wretched girl soon after fell into a profound sleep. Sister Bathilde expressed her intention of remaining with her until she should be better, or until her sorrows should be ended by death; and, after leaving money to provide for the patient's immediate wants, I retired.

"On the next day I again visited my patient, and found her fever somewhat abated, and the fury of her madness entirely subsided, although her mind was still incapable of comprehending her situation.

"I had made some inquiries of the *locataires* of the neighboring apartments, who told me that they knew very little of the young woman, owing to the secluded manner in which she had always lived, shunning their intercourse, and declining all the civilities which they had offered her. She was called, they said, Mademoiselle Aubry, and was one of the dancers at the Opera House.—She had lived here for some months with her

father, the old man who had just died, until, happening by accident to sprain her ankle, she had been unable to attend to her theatrical duties. This accident having deprived her of her only means of support, as the neighbours believed, they thought that the anxiety which it occasioned had brought on her fever; and that famine, or rather, perhaps, the want of such food as was necessary for his situation, had caused the death of her aged parent.

"At this period of my life I was by no means rich; but the allowance made to me for my expenses in Paris was an ample one, and, as I was far from extravagant, I was enabled occasionally to spare some of it. The fate of this unfortunate

cated the passionate storm that raged within it. Sister Bathilde told me she thought her patient's mind still wandered—an opinion which I soon discovered was too true. She, however, recovered her bodily health, and then resumed her duties at the theatre.

"One day, when she called to thank me for the services I had rendered her, and which the good sister had much overrated, I could not help expressing some surprise at finding a person of her appearance (for she had been evidently well and expensively educated, and was highly accomplished) in her present situation.

"'Sir,' she replied, 'the time has been when to relate the story of my shame and sorrow would have been impossible to me; but I am now daily learning to forget to feel. The world is worse than a blank to me; I have proved all its worst inflictions; and, although they have broken my heart, and, I fear,' putting her hand upon her head, as if it was the seat of great pain, 'unsettled my reason, I now only wait, despairing as I am, for an opportunity to retaliate.'

"She said this in a way which convinced me that she was still under the influence of mental disease.

"Recovering herself, however, she told me, with an astonishing calmness, that she was the only daughter of a merchant of Lyons, who, left a widower soon after her birth, had employed the

whole of the leisure which his avocations allowed in superintending the education of this child, in whom all his affection was bound up. Among the professors of the new doctrines of the *Philosophes*, at Lyons, was a distant relative of M. Aubry, a young man of fortune, whose name was Mainvielle. To a handsome figure this person added very agreeable manners, and, under a pleasing exterior, concealed one of the basest hearts that the school of modern philosophy ever formed. This young man, whose visits had been encouraged by M. Aubry because he admired his talents, succeeded in gaining the affections of the beautiful Adelaide; and when afterwards her father found it necessary to forbid Main-

tuous females, and which springs from their inexperience and ignorance of the nature of vice, was the rock on which her happiness was wrecked. She imagined that she could wipe away the few faults which prevented others from loving her Mainvielle as she thought they ought to love him; and she cherished in her bosom a serpent, whose venom withered her every hope of joy.

"Nothing could be more false than her reasoning; but she loved—and who ever loved and reasoned wisely at the same time? She yielded to the impulses of her own heart and to the persuasions of Mainvielle: she eloped with him; was deserted in a few months; and reached her father's house in a state of frantic despair, just time enough to learn that his ruin had come upon the heels of her own.

"M. Aubry's commercial speculations were upon an extensive scale, and of an intricate nature; his personal and active exertions were necessary to their success; and, as he was unable to make those exertions, in consequence of the overwhelming grief which his daughter's flight had occasioned, he became in a few months a bankrupt and a beggar. The wretched parent left the city, which had witnessed his prosperity, still, as he imagined, rich enough in the possession of his pardoned repentant child, and in the hopes of assistance from friends in Paris, who

had, over and over again, importuned him to permit them to make some return for the services which in his prosperity he had rendered them. On his arrival he found (as all men find) that his friends, by some accident or other, were well furnished with reasons that could not be gainsaid why they should not relieve him. When he had exhausted his last hope, and was without the food which was necessary to sustain life, Adelaide procured it by becoming a *figurante* at the Opera House; and upon the scanty earnings of this degrading labour she and her father lived until the accident which I have mentioned disqualified her for further exertion.

"When she had finished her story I expressed the compassion which I very sincerely felt for her griefs; and offered my services, feeble as they were, to remove her from the employment she had taken up to one better adapted to her talents and accomplishments.

"'I thank you, sir,' she said, 'no less for the benefits I have already received than for those which you now offer me: I am obliged to except you (and I confess that I am ungrateful enough to regret that I must do so) from the hatred which I bear to your whole sex—I had almost said the whole race: I do thank you as much as I can, but I decline your offer. The profession which I now follow supplies all my wants; and, while it makes me independent of the world, it

also insulates me from it. This is the only consideration that reconciles me to my fate. If I owed any thing to society, if the smallest obligation could be claimed from me, I should feel myself really humbled. But the world spurns me, and I am thankful for it. I am happy to be proscribed: I rejoice that doors are shut against me, for these things justify my hatred. I live now only for vengeance: the day approaches when Reason shall fix her throne upon the earth; when Freedom shall arise a new phœnix from the profane ashes of monarchs and palaces; when Justice shall be the universal law, and obedience to its decrees the compact by which the people shall be held together. Before that day shall arrive Mainvielle's perjured soul will be the prey of the legioned fiends who wait to snatch it, and my father's ghost shall be appeased!'

"While she uttered this rhapsody she was convulsed with passion, and appeared unconscious of all that was passing around her: having finished it, she sunk into a chair—in a few minutes became more composed—and soon afterwards left me. I saw that she was incurably mad, and I perceived that the spirit of the times had infected her with its most poisonous influence. For many months after this I saw nothing of her; though I learned that she had become one of the first dancers at the Opera, and that

she had appeared in public as the leader of a band of fanatics, who called themselves the Disciples of Liberty, while she personated the goddess: she was said also to possess great influence with a certain class of the people, and to be countenanced by the Conventional Assembly. During all this time, however, excepting when she was upon the stage or in public, she was wrapped in a moody melancholy, and shunned conversation of every kind, issuing her decrees to the mad mob who followed her in an obscure and oracular style, which was the more admired by them the less they understood it.

"Now it was that the events occurred which placed my life in great jeopardy. A relation,

was apprized of my ill fortune only time enough to escape out of my window while the soldiers who were in search of me entered the house.

"I ran, without knowing whither, through several streets; and fearing, as I approached the Opera House, that I might be pursued, I turned into the dark shadow of that lofty building, where I entered a passage, and stood concealed, to ascertain whether I was followed.

"I had not been there a minute when some one coming out ran against me. I begged pardon, and as soon as I spoke the voice of Adelaide exclaimed 'Ah! is it you, M. Montmorin?'

"In a few words I conjured her to be silent, and told her the reason of my being there. Without saying a word, she loosened a large cloak in which she was wrapped, and, throwing it around me, led me to the door, where a coach was waiting. On her appearing the carriage was opened: we both entered it without a word being spoken, and were driven to her house, where we alighted, and, concealing my face in the cloak as she bade me, I ascended the stairs with her.

"We entered a saloon on the first story, which was splendidly furnished, but in such a manner as strongly marked the spirit of those extraordinary times. The various articles—rich, and even gorgeous, as they were—had the appearance of having been brought from twenty different places. The hangings were of velvet, but those of one

side of the room were different from those of the other; the tables, couches, and chairs, had never been associated until they came together in that chamber: in short, every thing spoke of plunder and extravagance, and would have filled me with astonishment, but that I knew too well the excesses which had been practised by the leaders of the revolutionary factions, with whom, as I have said, I had heard that Mademoiselle Aubry was connected.

"Whatever her faults were, I am convinced they were the consequences of the cruel treatment she had experienced, and of the sorrows which had unsettled her reason. At all times, even when she was most composed, there was a wild glare in her eyes which spoke the unsettled and tortured state of her mind; and she would occasionally fall into fits of abstraction, so profound as to render her wholly insensible to external objects. In all her actions I saw unquestionable proofs of insanity; and I could hardly congratulate myself on having escaped the danger in which I had just been placed, since I had only changed it for so insufficient a protection as she could afford me.

"We began to converse on the subject of my affairs; and here she astonished me by the accuracy and interest with which she inquired into the most minute particulars of my conduct, and the affairs of my family, in order to ascer-

tain exactly upon what grounds the suspicions under which I had fallen were founded. The distraction I had before observed was now no longer apparent, although her eyes had still the same wild, but brilliant, glare. She wrote in a pocket-book all such details as she thought necessary; and, this being finished, she said—

"'I rejoice to find that there is not the slightest ground for the accusation that you are an enemy to freedom and a new state of society: but your danger is not therefore removed. At this moment to be suspected is to be guilty. The committees act upon a rigorous and a hateful, but, surrounded as they are by enemies of all sorts, perhaps a necessary policy: they order the execution of every body brought before them; and their sole object seems to be that the guillotine shall be hourly exercised. Your only safety, therefore, is in lying hidden until the means can be provided for your quitting Paris. How those means are to be accomplished I cannot even guess at present; but a short period will, most probably, in these times, make some change. At all events here you must remain, where you will be in perfect concealment, and therefore in perfect safety.'

"I was by no means so entirely convinced of my safety; but I thanked her.

"'We have no time to lose,' she said, inter-

rupting me: 'I must now install you in your new abode.'

"I followed her into a boudoir which adjoined the saloon where we had been sitting. She pushed aside a *chaise longue* which stood against the wall, and, pressing against one of the painted panels of the little chamber, it opened upon a small *escalier derobé*, which led to the *entre sol*, or floor between the rooms on the basement and the first floor. We descended, and I found it consisted of two apartments of the same size as the rooms above, but with the ceilings very low, as they must necessarily be from the construction of the chambers. They were comfortably furnished, and admirably adapted for the purposes of concealment, having no other entrance than

she said, with a mournful and emphatic gesture, 'that I had been called to some other destiny; but we are all the creatures of fate. Be satisfied of this, at least, that your life is much more valuable to me than my own, and that I will preserve you at the price of every thing most dear to me.'

"Soon after this she left me, and ascended to her own apartments. Her servant regularly attended me, supplied all my wants, brought me books which her mistress sent, and did every thing to render my imprisonment as light as possible. Mademoiselle Aubry, too, came and sate with me occasionally for a short time: her conversation, with respect to the strange commotions which then shook Paris to its centre, and which changed with the rapidity of lightning, and almost as destructively, was always so ambiguous, that I fancied at first it was an affectation, for the purpose of impressing me with a notion of her importance. I had reason afterwards to know that I was mistaken, and that she was really deeply concerned in the plots of the party which had just then obtained the ascendency. Our conversations never terminated without her having in the course of them made some allusion to Mainvielle, her seducer, and the cause of her own misery and shame and of her father's death; and she did not scruple to avow to me that she would pursue him to the grave. Remonstrance or advice on this point were equally vain: she

listened to me, but it was always with a fixed purpose not to be swayed by what I said, and with the desperate resolution of madness.

"Under the protection of such a person, you may imagine that I was not very tranquil. At first my seclusion was endurable; I read, wrote, walked about my chamber, and got through the first day pretty well. I felt that, irksome as this mode of life was, still, as it was life, I ought to be satisfied; and the thoughts of the guillotine helped to reconcile me to it. I began to seek for amusement without my chamber, and found it in watching the crowds of persons, of all descriptions, whom, at every hour of the day, I saw crowding into a mean-looking house opposite. I was strictly prohibited from taking down the blinds of my windows; but I was at liberty to avail myself of the opportunity they afforded me of looking through, which in this instance was quite enough for my purpose.

"For a long time I was puzzled with endeavoring to guess what common cause could bring together so many persons of different appearance. Among them I saw ladies, probably of rank, certainly of respectability, as well as the women of the markets; priests and advocates, as well as artisans and *sans culottes;* in short, every variety of character that the city of Paris could then produce, and such as were upon no other occasion ever found in the same place. They all

approached the house with a solemn and anxious air; the passage was soon filled, and the visitants took their places *en queue* in the street, advancing, as their predecessors retreated, slowly and at short intervals. As they went away their appearance was still more remarkable: some of them seemed to be plunged in the deepest melancholy; others bustled off with alacrity and evident satisfaction.

"At length I learnt from the servant the occupation of the person who attracted all these visitors, and my wonder was considerably diminished. He was a fortune-teller, and one who exercised an astonishing influence over the minds of people of all conditions. I now observed with still greater minuteness, and found that my window commanded a view of an apartment which I had not noticed before, and in which M. Martin (for such was the appellation of this renowned Magus) received the crowds who came to consult him.

"The prophet was as unpromising a person in his appearance as can be imagined: he had none of the qualifications which one should think indispensable for carrying on with success such an imposture as he had got up; on the contrary, he was a wretched-looking little man, whose lower extremities were so crippled, either by the effect of disease or by some natural defect, that he was obliged to use two crutches

with which he dragged his mishapen carcass to various parts of his chamber, as might be necessary. He received his visitors sitting in a large chair, and having a table before him, upon which was spread a large geographical chart; and he held in his hands a pack of cards. Nothing could exceed the gravity with which he put questions to his visitors, and who, on their part, were all in that sort of consternation which suited his purpose admirably. When he had obtained from them such particulars as he judged necessary to enable him to expound their destiny, he began to shuffle his cards with great rapidity, and to consult his chart. When he had passed a few minutes in this manner, accompanying his man-

philosophical, can permit such barefaced juggling.'

"'Nor would they permit it,' she replied, 'but that it is useful to their own designs. This man serves them as a spy, and as a spy of the most valuable kind, for he is himself not aware of the assistance he renders them. In a room beyond that in which you can see him receive his visitors, and separated from it by a very thin partition, is an agent of the police, who takes down in a register the names of the persons who come to consult M. Martin, and such particulars as their conference with him may elicit. This register is afterwards carefully inspected, and has often been the means of discovering secrets of the utmost importance; and which, but for this, would never have been unravelled. Martin, although perfectly uneducated, is a man of great acuteness: he possesses in an eminent degree the art of penetrating the characters of persons; and, while he fancies that he can predict destinies, he often provokes them by the informations which he makes his visitors give against themselves.'

"'But still,' I said, 'I cannot help being infinitely surprised that so many persons should be found who will suffer themselves to become the dupes of so gross an impostor.'

"'It is one of the consequences of these most singular times. The terror which reigns through-

out the country, and particularly in Paris, has paralysed even the firmest minds, and rendered them all open to superstitious influences. Five years ago Martin's trade would not have procured him bread, and, probably, would have introduced him to the Bicêtre: now it enables him to keep a handsome equipage, and makes him courted by all conditions of people.'

"'And upon what subjects,' I asked, 'is he principally consulted?'

"'Upon every one that you can imagine to be interesting to any description of persons. They come to him to inquire about lost and stolen goods—marriages, and affairs of gallantry—the guillotine—in short, upon all subjects indiscriminately; and, although his predictions are, I dare say, equally valuable upon all, it is upon questions of robbery that he piques himself most.'

"'And for what reason?' I asked.

"'Because he has been most successful in resolving such questions. It is true he always requires some time to deliberate upon these subjects, and makes his inquirers repeat their visits; but, ultimately, he generally succeeds in pointing out to them the means of recovering their property, or, at least, of bringing the offenders to justice.'

"'And how is he enabled to effect this?'

"'By means of the police, who, upon the first

application of the persons that have been robbed, set about making inquiries; and, when they have discovered the culprits, they leave to Martin the credit of giving the necessary information, which at once saves them the trouble of prosecutions, and keeps their valuable agent in perfect good humour.'

"When Mademoiselle Aubry left me, I continued to observe the conjurer's proceedings, and, with the explanation she had given me, I was no longer at a loss to account for the strange concourse of people which I saw hourly about his dwelling. From what I have since learnt, I have no doubt that this man was one of the most powerful agents in bringing about the various changes of the Revolution, by the constant and correct information which he furnished to the ruling parties and to the police.

"The time, however, began to pass very heavily with me, and the irksomeness of my confinement seemed daily to increase. I endeavored to divert my mind from the melancholy thoughts which pressed upon it with an intolerable weight, but the effort was almost in vain: I became restless and nervous; I could not sleep, my appetite failed, and I lost all interest in looking at the fortune-teller and his clients. The rooms seemed to have become too small and too low for respiration, and I felt constantly as if I was in danger of suffocation. I began to compare the danger I

ran of losing my life with the pain of staying longer in this place, which, though it contained every accommodation, was more hateful to me than the worst prison. At length I could endure it no longer, and I resolved, at all hazards, to quit it.

"When I reflect upon the sensations I then experienced, I am filled with astonishment at them, and can only account for them on the score of the nervous excitement which my danger had produced. I had often before remained, for the purpose of study, in rooms neither so airy nor so convenient as these, without experiencing any such pain: but now death seemed preferable to the anxiety and confinement I endured. The absence of Mademoiselle Aubry for three days deprived me of the only solace which lightened my dreariness, and confirmed me in the resolution which I had formed. I was only anxious that my flight should not involve her in any danger; and, night having come, I removed the fastening of my window, and dropped into the street without any noise, and, as I believed, unperceived. I went immediately to the garden of the Thuilleries, where I passed the night in one of the trees. As soon as the morning arrived I went in search of a friend, on whose assistance I knew I could rely. As I approached the house in which he lived I was struck by the altered appearance it exhibited. I mounted the staircase

hesitatingly, and filled with a fatal presentiment. It had usually been remarkable for the cleanliness and propriety with which it was kept, but it was now strewed with the most filthy and disgusting objects. I approached a door which was half open, and saw, in the room to which it led, a ruffian, with the *bonnet rouge* on his head, employed in mending an old shoe, and sitting upon the couch of my friend. I looked over the door, and saw inscribed in ill-shaped letters, and with chalk, '*Le Citoyen Rodier, Savetier.*' I could no longer doubt the horrible truth: my friend had fallen beneath the guillotine; and the citizen whom I saw pursuing his avocation of a cobbler had taken possession of his apartments. I turned away sickening and disgusted, and bent my steps towards another part of the city; but none of the persons whom I went in search of could be found. Most of them had fallen victims to the horrors of the times; and such as were fortunate enough to escape had saved their lives by flight. These disappointments filled me with despair, and increased the recklessness I before felt as to my own fate. I spent the whole day in wandering about, and towards nightfall, being exhausted with fatigue and anxiety, I crossed over to the Cité, where I entered a cabaret commonly resorted to by the charcoal-porters of the neighborhood. I took my seat with as unconcerned an air as I could

put on, and, calling for some wine, I began to contemplate the persons who sat about me, and whose numbers continued to increase. Their characters and conversation were such as at any other time would have amused me; but now my spirits were broken with care and anxiety.

"When I had been here about a quarter of an hour a person entered, who seemed to command universal respect from the ruffians by whom I was surrounded. The new-comer wore the uniform of an officer of the National Guard: he had a large cocked-hat, with a tri-coloured cockade in it, and a sash of the same kind round his waist. A brace of heavy pistols were stuck into this sash, and a long sword hung by his side.

but I judged it unwise to refuse the proffered civility. We touched glasses.

"'*Vive la Republique!*' said he.

"'*Vive la Republique!*' I replied, and the toast was immediately drunk with great fervour by the whole of the company.

"Le Franc took his seat by my side; and a story, which his arrival had interrupted, was resumed by a little ragged vivacious vagabond, who called himself a professor of music, and who seemed delighted that he had permission to proceed:

"'You all know, citizens, that the stupid old bigot, the curate of St. Sulpice, has refused to take the national oath. Not, however, content with this, he had determined to make his refusal public; and, in the hope of becoming a martyr, he announced his intention of doing so in the church this day. Of course crowds of people were drawn to see so imprudent and mad a piece of foolery; and the crazy old *calotin* had a full audience, and as fair a prospect of getting his brains knocked out as any old gentleman could desire; for among the congregation were many of our friends armed, and who had gone for the purpose of preventing any disturbance of the public tranquillity by killing whoever should attempt it. The old curate mounted the pulpit with a very imposing air, and thundered away with a most frightful sermon about the other world, and that

warm part of it which he plainly told us we were all destined to inhabit. As he found the people bore this pretty well, and only laughed at him, he began to quit his theology, and to touch upon politics. He commenced a long diatribe against the National Assembly, and became so abusive that it was too much for his hearers; they began to murmur, and at last to break out into loud threats. The poor curate turned pale, and a great outrage would perhaps have been committed but for a happy thought which just then suggested itself to me. Yes, citizens, it was I who prevented the holy curate from being made a martyr, and changed the indignation of the whole assembly into merriment! And how do you think I did it? You would never guess, so I'll tell you. I stole into the organ-loft, and, just as the tumult was getting at its height, I struck up *Ça Ira* as loud as ever I could play it. In a moment the face of things was changed: the lively air rang through the old vaulted roofs, which had never echoed to such a tune before; and every body was filled with good humour and patriotism. Some wag called out "Room for a dance!" Immediately every citizen present got himself a partner, and the church looked like a Turkish mosque filled with dancing dervises. The poor old curate was choused out of his martyrdom, and laughed at instead of being killed. Every body went home in good humour; and.

without being vain, I think I am entitled to some praise for the ingenious and novel manner in which I preserved the peace of the nation.'

"A loud shout of applause followed the tattered musician's recital, and he received the compliments and congratulations of every body present.

"Le Franc took this opportunity of addressing himself in a whisper to me.

"'I have had a long search after you,' he said, 'and in pretty company I find you at last.'

"'I did not want you to search for me,' I replied, 'and it cannot concern you in what company you find me. Surely you mistake me for some other person.'

"'No, I do not,' he replied, 'and, unless you speak lower, our friends here will know you as well as I do. This is no place for explanation; but, as we can't go out immediately, I'll let you into the characters of some of these gentlemen whose society you have chosen.'

"I had every inclination in the world to knock down my familiar acquaintance; but, besides that he was very much bigger and stronger than I, (and these are, in all conscience, reasons enough for not indulging such an inclination,) the consequence would have been certain death to me from the people about us: I therefore listened to him as he went on.

"'You see that ruffian with the beard, who

sits under the lamp yonder—Do you know who he is?'

"I replied that I did not.

"'That is the celebrated executioner—the owner of *rasoir national*, as he facetiously calls it. He has great need of a razor himself, as you may perceive by the length of his beard; and I know of none that would suit him so well as his own. He was formerly a slave in Morocco, where he rendered himself infinitely agreeable to the emperor, who is said to take great delight in seeing five or six heads cut off every morning before breakfast," for his own particular amusement. There it was that our friend suffered his beard to grow, of which he is now so proud. To an aspiring

[redacted]

calls the office he performs " a patriotic foreshortening." I see you are somewhat disgusted with him; so look at the tall man opposite to him; who is dressed literally in the costume of the *sans culottes*, but whose profusion of dirty linen forms a singlar contrast to his nakedness in every other respect. Shall I tell you where he got his shirt?—A few days ago the church of St. Genevieve was plundered, and he carried off for his own share the surplices worn by the choristers, which he has had transformed into these necessary articles of dress, and he now wears shirts for the first time in his life. That ferocious-looking woman, who wears a priest's robe by way of gown, is his companion, and shared in the plunder, part of which you now see. The little red-nosed man who is talking to her, and who is so drunk that he cannot speak intelligibly, was formerly a priest; but, when the Revolution broke out, his dissolute propensities and his fear of death made him turn patriot. He has countenanced and instigated more atrocities than, perhaps, any other private person in Paris. He has great influence with the lower order of the people, and particularly with the *gentler* sex, for he has a vulgar forcible style of talking, to which his habitual drunkenness adds great *onction*. That tall lean man at the other table, whose scraggy neck looks as if it invited our bearded friend's national razor, was a member of the learned profession,

and notorious for the length and dulness of his speeches: he was called, in the courts *l'avocat de sept heures*, because his harangues were of an almost interminable length. He is one of the orators of the communes now, and gains his forty sous a day by making speeches in favour of patriotism and the guillotine.' At this moment the room was thrown into confusion by a fight which ensued between the gentleman with the shirt and the drunken priest. Le Franc rose suddenly, and said 'I think I have told you enough about these worthy persons; and now let us retire, which we can do without being noticed.'

"We immediately quitted the cabaret, and, as soon as we had reached a part of the street where no one was passing, Le Franc said 'I have

Public Safety is at this moment sitting; and, if I should carry you thither, your existence would not be so long as that of the candles which are now burning.'

"'Well,' I said, in the tone and with the feeling of perfect despair, 'I can die but once.'

"'Nothing is more true than that,' he replied; 'all mankind agree that we can die but once; but there is a great difference of opinion respecting the time when that event shall take place. But now, helpless as you are, tell me, what madness has induced you thus to provoke your fate?—why did you leave that asylum in which you were at least secure?'

"'I was tired of my prison,' I replied.

"'That I can believe; but I don't think you will like any better to be guillotined.'

"This was true, and I could not now deny it.

"'Come,' continued Le Franc, 'I have promised to aid your escape, and I will keep my promise if I can: all that I have said was but for the purpose of showing you the actual extent of your danger, and punishing you a little for the trouble you have given me in looking for you all the day.'

"'And pray,' I said, 'since we are friends, may I ask you to what it is that I am indebted for the interest you have taken in me?'

"'To your being the friend of Mademoiselle

Aubry,' he replied, 'who has preserved my life, and for whom there is nothing that I would not attempt.'

"'And how did she discover that I had left my chamber so soon?' I asked.

"'Really, he said, 'your question gives me a great opinion of your simplicity. Did you suppose that any thing done, or even thought about, by you or by any one else in this town, can escape the lynx eyes of M. Martin, your late neighbour? He sent intelligence of your escape to Mademoiselle Aubry, and she immediately engaged me in your pursuit.'

"'Well, and even now,' I said, 'I am not sure that, with all your good intentions, you can effect

"To this I readily assented, and told Le Franc that I should willingly join his ranks.

"'So far, then, all is well,' he replied; 'but where to hide you in the mean time?—You can't return to Mademoiselle Aubry's house: that would not be safe; and it would, moreover, place us too much in the power of that old conjuring cheat, Martin, who, between ourselves, is as great a rascal as any in Paris; and that you may imagine, after the gentlemen you have just left, is saying a great deal for him. I have it,' he added, after a short pause; 'I know a man who will conceal you. Follow me; but, first of all, let me make you like an honest man and a citizen.' He then produced a large tri-coloured cockade, which he fastened into my hat as we walked on.

"We went towards the *Barrière de l'Etoile*, and, turning just before we reached it, we entered the house of a man who supplied a large part of the city with milk. Le Franc introduced me to him as a Jacobin, who had narrowly escaped assassination by some of the agents of the Brissotines.

"'It is necessary,' he added, 'that Monsieur should remain concealed for a short time, until the leaders of that accursed faction shall be guillotined, when their adherents will be too much occupied in looking after their own lives to attempt those of other people.'

"Le Nain, the milkman, had the most un-

bounded veneration for Le Franc, whom he took to be the greatest man and the warmest patriot in France: he therefore readily promised his co-operation, and installed me with great ceremony and secrecy in a granary so well filled, excepting in a space of about four feet square, which he cleared out for me, that it would have defied all search. Le Franc then left me, and here I passed seven days of torment, compared to which death, I am sure, would have been preferable; and, but for that contemptible love of life which 'sicklies o'er' our best and wisest resolutions, I should have embraced my fate. The confinement, and the apprehension I was under, excited again that nervous irritability, under which I had before suffered, to such a degree, that the slightest voices not only alarmed, but actually pained me. That I had some reason to fear you will believe when I tell you that twice were my friend the milkman's premises searched for persons denounced by the Committee of Public Safety; and once, when the soldiers entered the very granary in which I was hidden, a bayonet was thrust through one of the trusses in such a manner that the point passed within an inch of my temples. To move would have been to betray myself and to involve Le Nain in certain destruction: the first I would not have hesitated to do; but, coward as I was, I could not think of the latter without exciting a feeling

strong enough even to overcome my terror. I therefore lay still, and the soldiers soon quitted the granary. My friendly host had taken as much care of me as if I had been the veriest Jacobin that ever cut an honest man's throat. He brought me provisions at night, and used to let me walk up and down his kitchen for a quarter of an hour at a time: to have done so for a longer period, or in a more open place, might have betrayed us both. He had done me a thousand little kindnesses, which showed the man's heart was naturally good; and, if ill luck would have had it so, the bayonet must e'en have gone into my throat before I could have brought so good a fellow into a scrape.

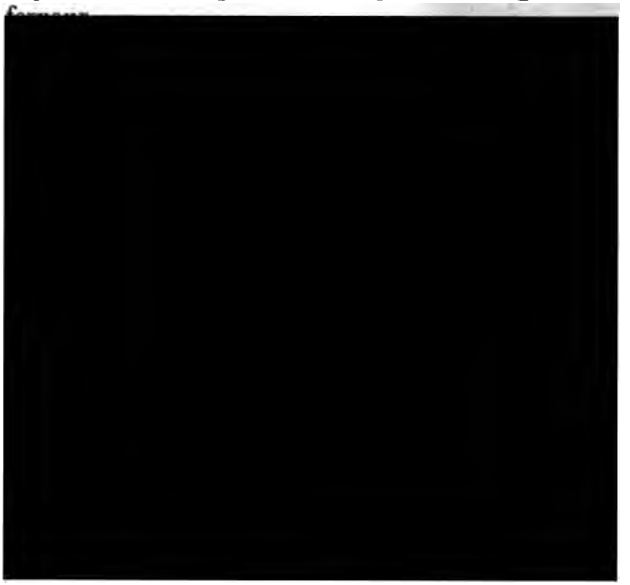
"At length the morning of the eighth day arrived, when, if my safety were not secured, I knew that my release would at all events be certain. Le Franc came to me early with a face full of alarm.

"'We shall be ruined,' said he; 'when the volunteers are drawn out this morning, they will be inspected by three of the deputies. They suspect that you are still in Paris, and they are resolved not to give you a chance of escaping. Your name, and those of two others, will be called out, and you will be marched from the parade to the *Place du Carousel*, where you will be guillotined without a moment's delay,—provided,' he added

after a short pause, 'we cannot deceive them But you do not seem frightened'

"'No,' I said, 'I am frightened at nothing but a longer suspense.'

"'Good!' said he; 'that desperate courage is of the right sort—come along!' He had provided me with a jacket, a military cap, (into which he stuck the cockade he had given me on a former occasion,) a musket, and a bayonet, all of which he made me assume. When we got out he put on an important strut, drew his sword, and, making me fall behind, he marched up to the barracks, which were formed in a sort of court-yard, near the entrance of Les Champs Elysées, whistling *La Carmagnole* with great



humour too well to disobey, seized his musket, and joined the volunteers who were drawn up in the court-yard.

" ' Take his place,' said Le Franc to me aloud; and he added, in a lower tone, ' when the deputies enter, keep your eyes upon your shoe-buckles, and cover your face with your musket as you present arms.'

" I took my post at his bidding, and now felt none of the fear which had overcome me in the granary; for there was a clear sky above me, I had a weapon in my hand, and I knew that, if I must die, I should, at least, not die the death of a dog, nor alone.

" Le Franc inspected his rascals with the air of a general, dealing curses and blows about with admirable profusion. The deputies soon afterwards approached: one of them was a butcher, whom I had attended in the Hotel Dieu when he had been stabbed by his wife in a domestic broil: he looked at me, but, fortunately, did not recognise me, and passed on. Then the oath of allegiance to the republic was administered; and, this done, the names of the three victims, my own being one, were called over. Two of them answered, were marched out of the ranks, and led to execution. The deputies complimented Le Franc on his zeal, and the appearance of his volunteers; and at length I was relieved from the horror of my situation by hearing the order to march

[illegible]

"As we approached the bar
of women, at whose appearance
circumstances than those in
myself, I must have laughed.
upon too many occasions, prove
bitter reproach which Voltaire
them; and even in their most s
they display full as much of the
tiger. These women were all, or
very lowest part of the communi
porters, and those women who
streets picking out with crooked
regarded trifles which lie in the
among them, ragged, squalid, an
sardes and *Les Dames des Halles*
making an odd contrast with the
to the not less ostentatious wret
others; and common prostitutes, a
wretches of all kinds, who were
grace to human nature as to th
they [illegible]

"When we came nearer I saw that Mademoiselle Aubry was at their head: she was thinly dressed in a theatrical costume, bearing a lance in her hand, on the top of which was the *bonnet rouge*. She represented the goddess Liberty, and awaited the volunteers at the gate, to animate their courage. As we passed she began a revolutionary song, to which the women of her party and the soldiers sang a chorus. The latter, I remember, was in these words:

'Vous, qui faites tant de victimes,
Ennemis de l'egalité,
Recevez le prix de vos crimes;
Et nous aurons la liberté.'

"While she was singing she threw a branch of poplar at Le Franc, and tossed to each of the soldiers smaller twigs from a basket which one of the women held. When I came up to her she stuck a sprig in the button-hole of my coat, at the same time thrusting something into my bosom, and accompanying this with a significant gesture, by which she enjoined my silence. I obeyed; for to have spoken to, or to have appeared to recognise her, would, at this moment, have been highly dangerous; and, after the narrow escapes I had lately experienced, I had just begun to think that my life was worth preserving. I therefore passed quickly on: we marched from Paris, and this was the last time I ever saw her.

When we halted I found an opportunity of examining what she had given me: it was a small purse, containing ten louis d'or, and a note to this effect:

'The two objects which alone bound me to existence are accomplished;—I am revenged, and you are saved. The traitor Mainvielle expired on the scaffold this morning in my sight:—the hand with which I write is still wet with his blood. You are at liberty—may you be happy! I have but to die; and, dying, I beseech you to forget 'ADELAIDE.'

"Mainvielle, with the rest of the Brissotines, had been that day led to execution. I learned that soon after our departure Mademoiselle Aubry was taken ill, and that a violent fever removed her, in a few days, from a world which had long been to her only a scene of grief and horror. I served for three years in the army as a private and a sa non-commissioned officer, during which time Le Franc died in my arms in the field of battle. The enemy were then driven beyond the frontier, and, tranquillity being restored to France, I returned to Paris. I there began to practise as a physician, which I have done ever since with tolerable success; and you may believe me when I tell you that I never reflect, without the most lively gratitude and wonder, upon the chance which

saved me from the fate of so many of my countrymen."

Soon after M. Montmorin had concluded his tale we rang for our chamber candles, and, after breakfasting together the next morning, we bade each other farewell.

... as the compliment
thought to deserve had been pai
cary's story, Harry was called up

He had been out of the roo
before, and, on his return, I pe
brought with him one of those li
which are often found on the shel
quary. It was bound in vellum,
to the leaves, and the covers were
with two massy and curiously cha
never in the whole course of my li
unpromising looking book. If I h
the particular bent of Harry's read
have thought that it was a colle
milies, or a treatise on divinity b
fathers, so solemn and grave an air
book.

My cousin Harry, however, soon
the conjectures I was endeavoring t

"When it was first proposed," he
tales, I recollected that I had in my
tion of some of the most

my amusement than to my profit. You, my dear grandmother," he added, turning to the old lady, "will forgive me for preferring Boccaccio to the 'Statutes at Large,' although you never read one of the latter; wherefore, as the Prince of Denmark has it, 'is your estate the more gracious!' and, although you know nothing of the charms of legal pursuits, you will believe that they are not so captivating as wholly to engross one's attention."

"I never knew you at a loss for some pretence to excuse that vagrant temper which leads you from the studies you ought to pursue to those more agreeable, but less useful ones, by which you will never gain a straw.—But, come, let us know to what this apologetic exordium tends."

"I assure you, my dear madam," he replied, "that I bow with as much humility as gratitude to your reproof. I will not even stop to remind you of the story my mother tells of an old lady who once set fire to her night-cap when she was reading in her bed-room, after all the family besides had gone to rest. I will not even insinuate that there is only one person who wears such high-crowned night-caps as could by any possibility catch fire. I will"——

"You are an ungracious boy," said the old lady, reddening a little; (for the story of the high-crowned caps always made her somewhat angry, *if*, indeed, so kind and gentle a temper as

hers ever felt what can properly be called anger;) "but, come," she added, recovering her good humour in an instant, and laughing as she patted Harry's cheek, "let us know what you are going to extract from that old-fashioned little book."

"Well, then," said Harry, "this volume contains the tales of (to my thinking) one of the most amusing of the numerous host of Italian novelists—I mean the worthy Giovan Francesco Straparola. I know that he is not held in the greatest reputation by some of the critics, and it may be true that many of his best stories are not original; but his manner of relating them is very delightful. I am sure I should be the most ungrateful soul alive if I did not pay him all the encomiums I think he deserves; for, whether ori-

command your veneration by merely showing you my book, and could make you fall down with as much alacrity and veneration as good Catholics feel at the sight of an indubitable relic of some of the early saints of their Church. Our good friend the attorney is an antiquary in his way, but then his are all local attachments; he loves topographical antiquities alone, and, I dare say, would as soon have one of the editions of 1664 as this, the real *editio princeps*, of which I am the fortunate and enviable possessor."

"You guess quite rightly," said the attorney; "but, although I don't value the date of the book, I should like to know what it contains."

"So should we all," said Elizabeth, "and Harry may keep his speech for some other occasion."

"I knew you had not the true relish for the real beauties of antiquity," said Harry; who did not like to be stopped in his harangue. Almost every possessor of a rare book, or indeed of any other article, becomes eloquent in its praise; and the first edition of the '*Piacevolissime Notti*' was certainly both valuable and rare, as Harry had been convinced by the price which a knowing book-dealer of London had made him pay for it.

"Leaving, however, the merits of my acquisition," he continued, "I must describe to you the manner in which Straparola introduces his stories, and which, I think, is not the least agreeable part of his book.

the house of Mantua, hastened
her father's retirement, to allevi
affection, the sorrows of his decli
of the reverses to which he was e

" The illustrious exile, finding
was not safe from the malicious p
enemies, collected together such w
and money as he had been able to
wreck of his fortune, and went t
his daughter, to whom, as she was
without children, her place of r
wholly indifferent, provided that it
to discharge her duty to her parent.

" After residing in the city of Veni
time, in the house of the renowned
tramo, a gentleman not less remark
high and ancient lineage than for
valour, his courtesy, and his honora
duke found a palazzo on the neigh
of Murano, which was exactly suite
and his family. Th

rich and various fruit-trees and flowers which abound in that genial climate. Numerous fountains, which were always playing, cooled the air; and the incessant and harmonious noise of the falling waters fell like a wild low music on the senses. Statues of rare workmanship were judiciously placed in the grove, and added to the delusions of the enchanting spot by seeming to people it with the old Arcadian deities, of which it might have been the worthy abode.

"The palazzo was of most spacious dimensions: it contained a magnificent hall and lofty and elegant chambers, and was approached by a very beautiful marble staircase. Among its other advantages was an extensive balcony, from which the prospect was of the most picturesque and agreeable description: it commanded the whole of the gardens, a view of the bright blue sea beyond, and the scene was terminated by the stupendous city of Venice, which reposed in calm majesty on the ocean, while its towers and spires seemed to seek the heavens.

"To this charming residence the fugitive duke repaired with his daughter and the whole of his establishment, and in its delightful retirement forgot the sorrows with the cares of sovereignty.

"The Lady Lucretia, by whose persuasions her father had been chiefly induced to make the purchase of this place, found nothing in it more delightful than the balcony I have just men-

tioned. Here she used to sit in the morning and in the evening of every day, enjoying the cool breezes, which at those times brought health and freshness from the waves of the Adriatic, and viewing the delightful and ever-varying prospect which the sea afforded her.

"By way of passing her time more agreeably, as well as for the purpose of forming such an establishment as befitted her state (having been deserted by those ladies who, in her more brilliant fortunes, had vowed to devote themselves to her for ever,) she engaged ten young ladies, fair, virtuous, and witty, to be her companions.

"Messer Giovan himself says that it would take up too much time if he should recount all

ambassador; the learned Pietro Bembo, afterwards the cardinal, but who, at this period, was only the commander of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem at Rhodes; the Vangelista of the citizens of Milan, a very able man, and one possessing great weight with the seignory of Venice. Bernardo Capello, a renowned versifier, was also a frequent visitor; together with the *amoroso* Antonio Bembo; the amiable Benedetto Trivigiano; the facetious Antonio Molino, or, as he was sometimes called, Burchiello; the courtly Ferier Beltramo; and many other gentlemen, whose names I cannot tell you, because the Italian says it would be tedious *(noioso)* to recount them; and therefore he leaves them out.

"These gentlemen and ladies were in the practice of making themselves agreeable to each other, and of consuming the evenings in various amusements, such as dancing, lively conversation, music, and singing; beguiled by which sports the fleeting hours glided rapidly away.

"One evening, when there remained but few of those days preceding the carnival, which in Italy are wholly devoted to pleasure, the Lady Lucretia commanded, under pain of incurring her displeasure, that the whole of the company then present, and which consisted of the persons I have named, should meet again in the balcony on the following evening, in order to hear, and to obey, if they saw fit, a proposition which she

intended to submit to them for passing all the evenings between that day and the carnival. Every one, of course, promised to attend; and all of them kept their promise, as people are apt to do when it suits exactly with their inclination.

"The signora then proposed, in a short, eloquent, and lady-like speech, which was delivered with such a winning gravity that it ensured, without commanding, obedience, that the order of the evening's entertainments should be as follows:—In the first place there was to be a dance; afterwards five of the ladies should *sing* in concert some canzonet of their own composition; and, this being finished, that they should each of them tell a story—the order of their

"Among these stories is that which I now propose to read to you, in compliance with the law which has been agreed to by all present; and I must be permitted to add that this story appears to me to be not only original, but in the highest degree pathetic. It tells of the fate of two lovers, and of an instance of savage inhumanity, which was unfortunately too common to excite surprise, and still less horror, in the country and at the time when it was perpetrated. It is, perhaps, impossible to ascertain, and certainly it is not worth while to inquire, whether the story of Hero and Leander formed any part of the foundation of this tale. Its termination is far more tragical than that of the Greek poem, and the incidents which are introduced add to its interest, as I think, in a very remarkable degree. I shall read it exactly as I find it in the text, preserving the meaning of the Italian as nearly as possible, and of course neither adding to nor diminishing it myself. The style you will find, like that of all Straparola's countrymen and cotemporaries, simple and severe, without any other ornaments than the pathos of the story furnishes. Some of those who may hear it may dissent from the uncivil and injurious things which are said, in the beginning of the story, against a passion which every body bows to, and some have no reason to quarrel with. In order to bring my friend Straparola off, I must there-

his readers against the fatal passion."

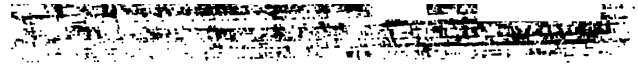
Harry then opened his book, read.

MALGHERITA SPOLETINA.

The Student's Tale.

If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong—
A heavy price must all pay who thus err
In some shape; let none think to fly the danger,
For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

DON JUAN.



MALGHERITA SPOLETINA.

[Malgherita Spoletina falls in love with Theodore, and, swimming across an arm of the sea by night to visit him, is discovered by her brothers, who afterwards deceive her by setting up a light, and thus draw her into the main ocean, where she is most unhappily drowned.—*Le Notti di Straparola, Nott. VII. Fav.* 2.]

Love, as I find it very judiciously described by the wisest men, is nothing more than an irrational desire springing from a violent passion; and this passion is induced in the human heart by too warm imaginations. Its disastrous consequences are the waste of worldly riches, the consumption of life and strength, the deprivation of

intellect, and the loss of liberty. There is in it neither reason nor regularity, nor stability. It is the parent of many vices, a scourge to young hearts, and death to old ones; and seldom or never does it lead to a good and happy termination. This was particularly remarkable in the case of a young lady of the house of Spoletina, who, under the influence of this fatal power, most unhappily and prematurely ended her existence.

Ragusa, most worthy ladies, is a very famous city of Dalmatia: it is seated on the sea-shore, and at a short distance from it is an island called L'Isola di Mezo, upon which stands a strong and well-furnished castle. Between Ragusa and this castle there is a dry and barren rock, of very small dimensions, on which nothing is to be seen but a miserable hovel, scarcely serving to keep out the weather. The inconvenience and insalubrity of this rock were such, that no person could be found to inhabit it but a young monk, who was called Theodore. He was a devout and holy man, and kept a small shrine of the Blessed Virgin in his cabin, whither the sailors and fishermen of the surrounding places used to bring their scanty offerings. Theodore lived on this rock, employed in prayer and pious mortifications. He was so wholly destitute that he had not the means of supporting existence; and he used to visit alternately Ragusa and the island of Mezo, to solicit charity.

It happened that one day, when Theodore had gone to the latter place to seek his daily bread by begging, according to his ordinary custom, a circumstance befell him such as he could never have expected. A young and beautiful maiden, whose name was Malgherita, saw him, and, being struck with his person, which was manly and elegant, and with the wretchedness of his condition, which was enough to move the pity of any tender heart, she became enamoured of him, and thought it was unfit that so charming a young man as he seemed in her eyes should spend his days in sorrow and solitude. The fair Malgherita suffered these thoughts to take possession of her bosom so entirely, that she thought of nothing but Theodore by night or by day.

He, who as yet knew nothing of the impression he had made, continued to carry on his necessary trade of begging, and often went, among other places, to Malgherita's house to implore charity.

Malgherita, upon all these occasions, gave him alms, although she did not dare to discover the passion she felt for him.

But Love, who soon becomes the tyrant of all who put on his seemingly gentle yoke, urged her to disclose her affection, and prompted her to address Theodore in the following manner:

"Theodore, my brother, and the only joy of my heart, so strong is the passion which con-

sumes me, that, unless you take pity on me, my life will soon be at an end. I can resist it no longer; and if, therefore, you would not cause my death, tell me that your love for me equals mine for you."

A burst of bitter and scalding tears followed this passionate declaration.

Theodore, who had never imagined that he was likely to inspire any one with love, was thunderstruck at this news, and remained mute with astonishment. He, however, soon recovered himself, and, replying to the lady, he displayed as much ardour as she herself had expressed. There were, however, so many obstacles in the way of their indulging their passion, that he was full of despair, and he represented them forcibly

across would probably cost your life, and must certainly be discovered."

"Fear not," she replied; "leave the whole affair to me, and I will find a way of coming to you without putting my life or my honour in peril, and without the smallest danger to you. When you put up the light I will plunge into the sea, and swim over to your rock. This I can do with great ease, and without the possibility of being discovered."

"Indeed," cried Theodore, "you mistake the dangers which you will have to encounter. Your strength is not sufficient to hold out so great a distance; you will fail, and die in the attempt."

"I am not afraid," she replied, "and I am bent upon doing it. I know my own strength, and I can swim like a fish."

Theodore endeavored to dissuade the maiden from a resolution which he thought little better than madness; but in vain. He was at length obliged to promise that he would comply with her directions; and they then parted.

The night being come, he set up the light as she had directed him; and, preparing every thing for her reception, he went to the edge of the rock to wait her coming.

As soon as Malgherita saw the light, for which she had been waiting in all the anxiety of that passion which absorbed her whole soul, she began to put her resolution in practice. She divested

herself of the greater part of her clothes, retaining only such a garment as would not impede the motion of her limbs in swimming, and then, plunging into the sea, she boldly breasted its tide. She had not overrated her expertness in this exercise, for which the women of Dalmatia are famous, and in less than a quarter of an hour she reached the rock.

Theodore received her in his arms, and bore her to his humble dwelling, where, kneeling before the Virgin's shrine, they implored her blessing. In the sight of Heaven, and accompanying their oath with the solemnities prescribed by their religion, they swore to be true to each other while their lives should endure.

No human eye witnessed this marriage; the

and drove her out of her course, so that she was seen by some fishermen, who were pursuing their occupation. At first they took her for a large fish; but, looking more closely, they found she was a woman, and they then watched her until she reached the rock, where they saw her land, and enter Theodore's cabin. This, however, did not diminish their astonishment. They staid near the rock until she returned; and then, marking the course she took homeward, they rowed after her, and, in spite of all her precautions, they discovered who she was.

These poor fellows at first had no intention of betraying the secret with which they had thus accidentally become acquainted; but afterwards, when they came to discuss the matter, and to think of the disgrace which must ultimately be brought upon a respectable family if it were not put a stop to, as well as of the nightly peril in which the young girl's life was placed, they resolved they would disclose all that they knew. They therefore went to the house of Malgherita, and, asking to see her brothers, the fishermen told the young men every particular that they had seen.

The brothers heard this fatal intelligence with great emotion. At first they could not believe it, and proposed, before they gave credit to it, that they should have the evidence of their own eyes; but, after examining again the fishermen, and

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resident, which was immediate
tion.

The youngest of the three b
fall got into a boat, and rowed q
clandestinely, to the rock where
When he arrived there he told th
was, and besought him to give hi
the night, alleging, as a reason
that he had been engaged in an a
terminated unfortunately; that, fo
had taken in it, his life was forfeited
the land; and that, if he should be s
inevitably die.

Theodore, who was delighted wi
tunity of being useful to a brother
rita's, received him with the utmost
He put before him the best fare his h
ed, and sat up the whole of the night
with him.

In the mean [illegible]

embarking on board a small sailing-boat, having first provided themselves with a torch, they directed their course towards the rock. When they reached it they made fast the boat, and then fixed the light they had brought with them to the top of the mast in such a manner that it was sure to be seen by their hapless sister, whom they had left on the island of Mezo.

Their design succeeded;—the courageous girl, as soon as she saw the accustomed signal of the light, threw herself boldly into the sea, and swam towards it.

The brothers, upon hearing the noise which Malgherita's swimming made in the water, loosened their boat, and, taking up their oars, they rowed slowly and silently from the rock towards the main sea, the light still being fixed up against the mast.

The luckless girl, who, owing to the darkness of the night, could see nothing but the light, which to her had always, hitherto, been a favoring as well as a guiding star, followed it without hesitation, and did not perceive that it changed its place. The brothers, in the mean time, never ceased to row on; and their vessel proceeded as steadily and as fatally as the footsteps of Death. At length, having arrived at the deep ocean, they on a sudden extinguished the torch.

Malgherita, when she lost sight of the light, was in utter confusion and despair: she did not

know where she was, or what she could do; her strength began to fail, from the long exercise she had taken; and, finding she was far beyond the reach of any human help, she abandoned herself to her evil destiny, and her delicate body was swallowed up, like a wrecked vessel, by the remorseless and devouring sea.

The elder brothers, satisfied with the result of their savage scheme, returned home to the island. The youngest, when the day appeared, repeated his thanks to Theodore for the asylum he had afforded him, and departed soon afterwards. The news was spread about, first through the castle, and afterwards all over the island, that Malgherita Spoletina was nowhere to be found. The hypocritical and sanguinary brothers affected

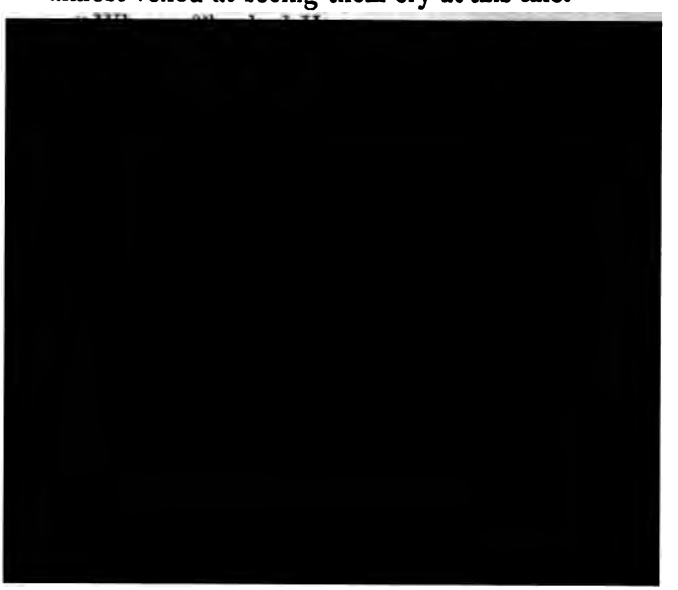
as he was able, he took hold of the inanimate body, and drew it out of the water, and carried it into his hovel. His grief now became uncontrollable; he cast himself upon the corpse, and kissed the pale lips, lamenting and mourning, while the rapid tears fell from his eyes upon her heavenly bosom, as white—and now as cold—as the mountain snow. He called upon her in vain, and the echo of his desolate abode repeated his passionate exclamations.

When his grief (by being indulged unchecked) had spent itself, he thought of the necessity of performing the last rites of sepulture to his beloved Malgherita. He took the spade with which he usually labored in his little garden, and dug a grave near his hovel: then, with many tears, he closed those eyes and that mouth—once his greatest joy and pride, now dimmed and cold in death—and made a garland of roses and violets, which he put upon her head. This being done, he kissed her for the last time, laid her in the grave and covered her with earth.

"There," said Harry, as he closed his book, "my story is at an end; and I see, by the redness of some of the eyes about me, that it has had its usual effect."

"It is a very melancholy, but, at the same time, I think, a very disagreeable story," said Elizabeth.

"I think so too," said the attorney; "and, although I have no objection to people's indulging their feelings in any way they like, I am almost vexed at seeing them cry at this tale."



ners and customs of society were very different from those of the present day; and Dalmatia, you know, was not a very refined place. But, though manners change, human beings and human passions remain still the same. You do not object to the improbability of the tale of Hero and Leander; and yet the strait at Ragusa, where the action of my story passes, is much narrower than the Hellespont; while *my* lady has only to swim half of that diminished distance. But the real ground of your objection, I believe, is the homeliness of the characters: this I take to be the great art of the story-teller. He has been able, out of very rude materials, to make a tale which draws the tears from any one who hears it, and has continued to do so for now nearly three hundred years. Even you can't deny that I saw you steal the back of your hand across your eyes, towards the end of the story; and they look a little watery even now."

"Pshaw!" said the attorney, "I have a bad cold."

"No matter," said Harry, "I maintain that the plot is a good plot. A modern romance-writer, with a dash of his pen, would so dress up the hero and the heroine, that you should confess they were quite delightful people: even Elizabeth herself would not have a word to say against them; and you, who now abuse, would be the first to pity and praise them. I contend again that this tale contains the mate-

rials for one of the most affecting and powerful tales of star-crossed passion that ever I read in my life; and for this reason I am obliged to vindicate my little friend in the vellum binding."

"It is, as you say, Harry," interposed my grandmother, "a very pathetic story; and, although I by no means agree with you in the very warm praises you have lavished upon Straparola—whose works I know very well, though I have not so rare an edition as you have been boasting of—I am ready to confess that this tale alone would exempt him from the censures he often deserves. The last part is exquisitely touching; I mean from Theodore's discovering the body of his mistress—his lamentations over her—the incident of his preparing her

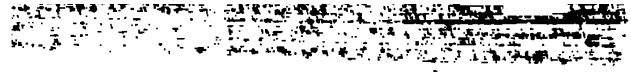
to the vote whether to read a story from a book can be called a compliance with the regulations we have all agreed to."

"By no means," cried every one present; for the prospect of making Harry tell two stories instead of one was universally agreeable.

It was in vain that he remonstrated upon the ground that a translation was as good as an original story: he was unanimously condemned, and his judges were too much interested in the doom to relax a jot of their sentence.

"As you are not quite ready to begin, perhaps," said my grandmother, "and as it is my turn next, I will go on; and in the mean time you may prepare. I cannot, however, resist this opportunity of pointing out to you another illustration of a maxim I have often endeavored to enforce upon you—that 'lazy folks always take the most pains.'"

The old lady then began as follows: —



THE OLD GREY CLOAK.

My Grandmother's Tale.

My cloake it was a very good cloake,
  Itt hath beene always true to the weare;
But now it is not worth a groat—
  I have had it four-and-forty yeare.

OLD SONG.

THE OLD GREY CLOAK.

The bells of the little city of Birling did not ring every day, nor upon any but really important occasions. The cause which produced so merry a peal from them at the period when this tale begins was nothing less than the election of a new magistrate.

M. Wiesel, upon whom the civic promotion had just been conferred, was a practitioner of the law, and had, by the regularity of his conduct for some years, commanded the respect of his fellow-citizens. The moment had at length arrived when he was to reap the reward of his meritorious exertions, and to receive an unequivocal mark of the esteem of his neighbours, by being elected a member of the senatorial body by which the affairs of the city were governed. It is true Birling was one of the very smallest cities of one of the very smallest provinces of

Germany: but still it was a city, and its senate was composed of real senators; and as it is something to be a senator of a city, though it be never so small a one, the advocate was highly delighted at this accession to his consequence.

The choice of the council had just been announced, and the worthy burgher who had the custody of the bell-tower had set his myrmidons to work, in anticipation of the bounty of the new senator, whose success he thus loudly published to the world, or, to speak at once more modestly and more properly, to the good folks of the city of Birling. The council was breaking up; and the steps of the town-hall were covered by the worthy politicians of the burgh, who, according to their various opinions or interests, approved or censured the election of their superiors.

M. Wiesel went home in that sort of comfortable good temper which, when their wishes are accomplished, is apt to be generated even in the minds of men who are not always amiable. He announced his new rank to his gentle and handsome wife with more urbanity than he was wont to display. Before she had time either to reply or to congratulate him upon this event, which was only agreeable to her because she saw that it gave him pleasure, the town-clerk entered the room.

Waldau was one of the kindest and most single-hearted creatures in the whole world. He

had been M. Wiesel's schoolfellow, and had lived with him, from the days of their boyhood to the present time, on terms of the strictest and most familiar acquaintance. Now, however, that M. Wiesel had become a senator, while he remained only a town-clerk, poor Waldau thought that affairs were very much altered. He knew too well what belonged to the dignity of the office to fail in any of the respect which was due to a senator; and he approached him to pay, in what he considered the most polite and proper manner, his congratulations to his new superior.

"How d'ye do, Waldau?" said the senator, with a patronising air.

Waldau replied with a speech which he had prepared for the occasion, the half of which, at least, was composed of law terms and technical phrases.

"And after all this, Waldau," said M. Wiesel, "sit down, and let us taste some wine. Commendations, as my father used to say, make one's throat insufferably dry."

"Many thanks to you," replied Waldau, "but at present I must decline your hospitality: time presses; to-morrow, at day-break, *ante lucem*, I must away to the *residenz*, whither I am sent on business for the city. Will *your worship* honour me with any orders or commissions?"

"Of orders, Waldau, it will be time enough

to think when I shall have taken my seat as a senator, and shall have a right to give them: and as to commissions, I think I will not trouble you with any; for though they seem, when they are undertaken, as light as feathers, I know they prove as heavy as lead when they come to be executed."

"But not between old friends, as we are," said Waldau, whose newly-excited respect was wearing off in the warmth of conversation; "no fear that any thing which may serve you can prove burdensome to me."

"Well then," replied the senator, "since you offer so kindly, I think I will trouble you with a letter, which you will oblige me by delivering personally. You are an intelligent person, my dear Waldau; and you will be able to read in the eyes of my brother, to whom this letter is addressed, the answer which he may make to it."

"Your brother! What, Maurice?—is Maurice then alive?" asked the town-clerk, in a joyful tone.

"He is alive," replied Wiesel, coldly; "and, what is more, he is now living at the *residenz*. This same Maurice, of whom we have heard nothing for ten years past, and whom we all thought lay buried in the depths of the ocean, has suddenly come to life—roused, I suppose, by the news of his father's death. He has written to me a long letter full of complaints; the bur-

den of which is, that he is in great distress, and wants money. Now I know the world too well not to see that under this seeming petition for assistance is couched a real claim for what he thinks himself entitled to under a distribution of his father's estate. To this I have to reply, 'It is true, Maurice, that our father is dead, but he has left nothing behind him: it is true that he was thought to possess some property, but, unfortunately, I know not where to find it. Perhaps his habitual distrust may have induced him to conceal it, and his death, which was sudden, prevented him from disclosing the secret of its hiding-place. At all evénts, Maurice this is a piece of very ill fortune for both of us, and more particularly for you, unless you have reformed your conduct.' In short, Waldau, I have explained to Maurice that our father's death has left me, as well as himself, no richer than we were before; and, for his further satisfaction, I have enclosed him copies of the documents relating to the affair. There they are—the probate, the letters testamentary, the inventory, and all the rest, with which you are as well acquainted as I, or, perhaps, still better, for some of them are in your own handwriting."

"My hand played me false," said Waldau, "if it wrote aught that could give pain to poor Maurice; but yours, senator! yours will not add to his affliction. Come, I know you are a

strict man; I know that you respect and practise forms upon all proper occasions; but I know, too, that you have a kind heart. If you have thought it necessary to lay before your brother a regular statement of your father's testamentary affairs, I am sure you have added some words of consolation—something affectionate, by way of postscript. Come, is it not so, senator?"

M. Wiesel shook his head.

"Why, zounds, man! then," said Waldau, forgetting, in the warmth of his heart, the dignity of his old friend, "you would not have me the bearer of such a letter to your brother—to poor Maurice. Your brother! he's my brother as well. Did we not grow up together? have we not laughed together, cried together, learnt our lessons together, played truant together, and been flogged together?—nay, more, have we not been flogged for each other?"

The town-clerk's voice faltered, and his eyes filled with tears, as the memory of his youthful friendship for poor Maurice came into his mind, along with a thousand other tender recollections.

Madame Wiesel, who had at first smiled at Waldau's vehemence, now wept also. Maurice had always been her favorite; the severity of his father, the old M. Wiesel, had driven him from home, in consequence of some youthful irregularities, neither so many nor so heinous as to deprive him of the affection of his friends, in

which number were included all the young people of the town. Madame's heart was stored with kindly feelings, and the unlucky but good-hearted Maurice had ever been one of the few persons whom she warmly loved.

To conceal her emotion, and to give a turn to the conversation, which had now become rather painful, and was on a subject which had already occasioned more than one domestic difference between herself and her husband, she asked Waldau how he meant to travel.

Waldau was not sorry to change the subject; and, as he knew of what stern and cold materials the senator's heart was made, he regretted that his feelings had betrayed him into any emotion. "Yonder," said he, with an ironical gravity, "stands my travelling chariot;" and he pointed to the post-house which stood opposite to the window, and in the front of which was a long covered waggon. "That is the conveyance, at once swift and convenient, by which I am to perform my journey to the *residenz*. You smile: why, surely, you would not have me travel post—me, whose poverty is at least as well known as my name—when the senators themselves do not indulge in the luxury of posting. Besides, I am going on an errand which requires a modest style of travelling. My business is to procure the reduction of a tax which our miserable town cannot afford to pay."

"That same poverty seems indeed to be the common lot of us all. But you, my poor Waldau, are still more to be pitied, on account of the large family of relations who depend entirely on you for support; and, now that your proposed marriage with the councillor's niece is broken off"——

"Ah! no more of that, I beseech you, dear Madame: spare my feelings. To be jilted is a man's fate, but he does not like always to be told of it. I am forgetting her very rapidly, I assure you."

"That's easily said, Waldau," cried the senator, "and I don't blame you for putting a good face upon your disappointment; but I think you won't forget her fortune so soon as the fickle fair." As he spoke he looked rather maliciously at Waldau's threadbare coat, some of the buttons of which had been as faithless as his mistress, and had deserted it. The poor town-clerk's coat was, in fact, one of that sort at which every man who wears a better has a prescriptive right to sneer.

Madame interposed her gentle voice. "Dear Waldau," said she, "I hope your travelling dress is thicker and better than this: the north wind, which has just set in from the mountains, will cut through a coat like yours."

"Really," replied Waldau, "I don't mind, among friends, confessing the scantiness of my

wardrobe; and, to tell the truth, this is the only coat I have in the world. I had a cloak, but I have given it to my poor old grandmother, who is confined to her arm-chair with the rheumatism, and who stood in great need of something warm to wrap her old bones in. Egad, I am going to set off in a plight almost as bare as in that which the prodigal son returned."

Waldau said this with an attempt at a smile, but it was hardly a successful one. It goes against the grain sadly to cut jokes at the expense of one's own and only coat; and, truth to tell, Waldau's was a coat which would not bear joking in such weather. It might do well enough to excite a laugh in the summer, if it had been seen in the serviceable employment of scaring the crows from a corn-field; but enveloping a human body at mid-winter, in one of the coldest parts of Germany, Heaven knows it was enough to make one's teeth chatter to look at it.

There was nothing of which Waldau stood more in need at this moment than a cloak: Madame Wiesel thought so too.

"Dear Philip," she said to her husband, in a persuasive tone, "pray lend him your cloak."

"Indeed you must excuse me," replied the senator; "the north wind will spare me no more than it will our friend. There is an old cloak of my father's somewhere up stairs, which I will go and seek; for, if he goes to Felsenbourg without

some better covering, he will be petrified by the time he reaches the *residenz;* and, instead of procuring the remission of our taxes, he will be shut up in the museum as a curiosity."

"This old mantle," he continued, addressing Waldau, "is warm and large; and although it is not very smart, and has a great many patches, you will find it keep out the cold, perhaps, better than a more showy one. When you have done with it at Felsenbourg, give it to Maurice in my name; it may be useful to him, and in any event, its patches and homeliness will remind him of his father's wise parsimony, and may serve as a wholesome lesson to him."

M. Wiesel, having finished this *tirade*, quitted the room to look for the cloak which had in-

in support of which he also quotes Cap. LXX. of the Digest '*De Heredibus*,' that"——

Madame interrupted his learned harangue, of which she knew she could not comprehend a word, even though Bynkershoeck himself had come to explain it to her. "Never mind, Waldau," she said—"never mind the law of the case; but let me beg of you to communicate to Maurice the news of his brother's unkindness in as gentle a manner as you can. I beseech you to console him as much as possible. Poor Maurice! tell him that my hands are tied—that I can do nothing but weep over his fate, and pray for him."

"I will tell him so," replied Waldau, "and I warrant the news of thy kindness and good wishes will do him more good than his brother's brutality will do him harm. He must be altered indeed if the loss of fortune can make him unhappy."

The senator entered with the cloak, which Waldau received very thankfully, notwithstanding its odd fashion and party-coloured appearance. He then bade adieu to M. Wiesel and his good wife, and retired to prepare for his departure.

The next morning, at day-break, Waldau deposited himself in the clumsy vehicle, which, for want of a better, was to carry him to Felsenbourg, the seat of the administration of the province. This carriage was a covered waggon, heavy and

incommodious, compared to which even a French diligence, odious as that is, was a desirable conveyance. It was more commonly used for the carriage of merchandise than of human beings; and on the present occasion Waldau found that his only fellow-passengers consisted of huge and heavy packages. The waggon was lighted by a narrow opening, at the end towards the horses. Two antique curtains of oiled leather, and the body of the driver, closed up this aperture, and let in only so much air as was absolutely necessary for respiration. Waldau was a spare man, and very sensible of cold: he had, besides, a great aversion to bad tobacco; and the driver had a pipe, nearly as large as his boot, filled with some of the most detestable quality of that most detestable weed, the fume of which the wind drove pitilessly into the face of the town-clerk of Birling. He, however, stretched himself upon the luggage with which the waggon was filled, and soon fell into a profound sleep, from which neither the roughness of the road, nor the occasional stoppnig of the waggon when the driver paused to vary the dryness of his pipe with a *schnapp*, awakened him.

At length a sudden jolt, which was followed by a storm of hard knocks on his back and sides, effectually aroused poor Waldau. He found himself dreadfully bruised, and nearly smothered among the boxes and packages. He called as loud as he could, and was with some difficulty

extricated by the driver and his companion from his painful situation. It seemed that the thick-falling snow had so effectually blinded the driver, that he had not been aware of a deep rut in the road, by which one of the wheels was caught, and the waggon thus overturned. When Waldau was drawn from the heap in which he lay buried, he found himself so stiffened and hurt by the hard blows he had endured as to be unable to take any active part in setting the waggon on its wheels again. This task was, however, after some time, effected by the others, who helped Waldau to resume his place; after which the rest of the journey was completed without any further accident.

When they arrived at Felsenbourg, Waldau, although he suffered a good deal from the effects of his upset, was so anxious to embrace his old friend, that he had no sooner deposited his slender baggage at the sign of "The City of Birling" than he repaired to the Hotel Felsenbourg, where, as he learnt by the direction on the letter, he was to find the unlucky Maurice.

The evening was somewhat advanced; and the streets of the town, very different from those of his own quiet little place of abode, were filled with passengers on foot and in carriages. Waldau at length found out the place to which he had been directed, and saw written, above a very well lighted portico, "The Felsenbourg Palace." He entered with timidity and hesitation, looking

about for some one who would inform him in what part of so vast an edifice he might find the very humble individual he was in search of. While he was thus employed a young man passing by him attracted all his attention. There was quite light enough for him to see that this person was dressed in a most splendid manner. He wore a court dress, glittering with lace and embroidery; and in his hand he held an elegant hat, decorated with a large white plume. The town-clerk drew himself up to let this superb personage pass, when, by the half glance which his awe permitted him to steal at him, he recognised, to his astonishment, the banished son! his own friend of former times!—in short, Maurice!

Waldau was overcome with surprise. He could not believe his eyes;—he thought he was under the influence of some illusion. He attempted to speak, but the sound died upon his lips; and all that he could do was to stand open-mouthed, gazing after the receding apparition which had thus suddenly crossed his path, and which made him doubt the evidence of his senses.

He soon recovered himself, but continued to gaze at the figure as it passed along the extensive colonnade, under the lamps of which the glittering of the dress and the waving of the white plume made it still visible. At this moment a little man dressed in black passed, and Waldau advanced with an air of desperate resolution to

ascertain whether he had really been deceived or not.

"My good sir," he said, half breathless, "will you do me the favour to tell me who is the gentleman just entering yonder door at the end of the colonnade?"

"Yes, sir," replied the little man; "that is M. Wiesel."

"Is it, indeed, M. Wiesel? But tell me, sir, for heaven's sake, in what character is he here to-night."

"In a very important character, I assure you, sir," replied the little man, making a grave bow; no less than that of the prince's confidant and chief favorite."

Waldau was now more surprised than ever; and so rapt was he in his astonishment that he did not perceive that the little man, from whom he meant to ask a thousand other questions, had disappeared. His delight at the prosperity of his friend transported him beyond measure, and he burst into a sort of ecstacy, exclaiming, in a tone something like that of Don Quixote when he made his first sally into the plain of Montiel, "O fortunate Birling! thrice-blessed city! I see Prosperity and Plenty directing their flight towards thee! The favours of the court, *gratia regum*, honour, renown, and distinction among the cities of the land, will be thy lot. The horn of abundance will be poured out within thy walls. From the

confines of thy narrow tomb look out, thou inflexible father, and see that he whom thou didst exile from thy roof is become the ornament of thy family—*stirpis decorum!* Inexorable brother, come hither, and look upon this new Joseph! repeat, with thy cruel prototypes, 'Behold, he whom we banished is now sitting on the right hand of the prince!' Gentle, amiable Mary, what joy will be thine! Heaven has listened to thy prayers. And ye, my friends and fellow-citizens! ye also shall rejoice; for he whom you have bewailed is returned, and you shall share in his glory!"

After this very emphatic soliloquy, in which the town-clerk of Birling unburdened himself of the feelings which labored in his bosom, he felt

tempered as when we were all three together at school, enjoying in equal shares the rod of our old master, who has, ere this, I trust, received his reward in the lower part of the other world, and to whom nothing can be at once so much of a privation and a punishment as to dwell in a *bottom*-less pit. You see, worthy senator, a good heart does not change with the variations of fortune—

'*Virit gabiis ut virit in agro.*'

'In courts, as in a cot, his life the same.'

"Juvenal was right—and so was Madame Wiesel, whose hands I most respectfully kiss—assuring you, senator, that I am

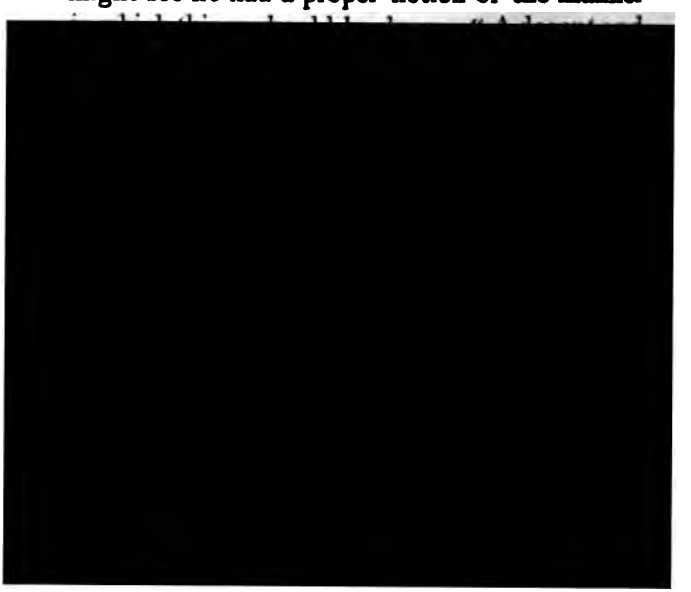
"Your most faithful friend and servant,

"GOTTFRIED WALDAU."

Waldau thought this was an occasion on which no expense should be spared, and he therefore dispatched his letter by an express before he went to bed.

After the excitement occasioned by the recent events had in some measure subsided, and the leisure of repose, as well as the warmth of the bed, enabled him to think of himself, he began to feel the effects of his fall, which he had scarcely had time before to attend to. He was seized with a violent pain in his loins, and tormented with a fever, which prevented him from sleeping during the whole of the night, and thus deprived him of all the glowing dreams to which

his meeting with the noble Maurice must have given birth. In the morning he found himself so unwell that he was compelled to send for a physician. The good Waldau was chagrined at this piece of ill fortune, less on account of his own sufferings than for the attack which the expense attending his illness must necessarily make upon his very slender purse. When, however, he thought of Maurice, he became in some measure tranquillized; and he immediately set about writing to his old schoolfellow in a style which he thought well adapted to the occasion, and very courtly, carefully putting the title of Excellency at the head of his epistle, that Maurice might see he had a proper notion of the manner



silence, but it was merely for the purpose of indulging his causeless ill temper against his patient wife, who sat quietly at work at one end of the room, and who was too much accustomed to his unjust reproofs to suffer them to make any impression upon her. This matrimonial amusement was interrupted by the servant's entrance, who announced that a courier from the *residenz* had arrived, and desired to speak with the senator. The man was admitted, and, advancing towards M. Wiesel, handed him the dispatch. After turning it round, and over and over again, to find the mark by which the payment of the postage was indicated, and without which the senator never opened any letters, he asked the express if he had received nothing besides the packet.

"No," replied the man, "nothing but orders to make haste hither, and to take four florins of you for my pains."

Wiesel at first intended to give back the parcel to the messenger, not choosing to run the risk of so costly an affair, which might, after all, be worth nothing; but the man's assurance that he had been told by the writer that its contents were of the highest importance at length induced him to break the seal.

His wife looked earnestly at him as he perused the letter: at first his eyebrows were contracted, and his forehead drawn into deep wrinkles; soon, however, his features relaxed, and he looked

raised to that Heaven by whic
been heard.

"Take a pen," said Wiesel,
letter;" my hand trembles toc
me to write."

She hesitated; but, as her
Madame Wiesel did as he bade
was short, and was dictated b
announced to the town-clerk hi
off immediately for the *residenz*,
to get a lodging ready at the i
himself staying.

While Madame was writing,
resumed his walk up and down t
visible agitation. Ill humour,
and constraint, by turns tortured
den he put his hand to his head, a
him."

"That unlucky letter," he cried
be done if my brother has seen it?
Waldau may have given it to h

quest? I would lay a hundred to one that Waldau, wise as he is, has been fool enough to give it him; and this newly-made grand gentleman, Maurice, who only wants an excuse to break off our connexion, will leap for joy at the pretext which it will afford him."

The answer was now delivered to the messenger, together with the four florins, and he was sent off.

The senator then took his hat and cane, and repaired to a coffee-house, where he was in the habit of passing his evenings.

In this social spot about a dozen of the inhabitants of the city were in the invariable practice of assembling nightly around an immense stove, where they contrived, notwithstanding that an earthen substance of some sort was constantly between their lips, either in the shape of a long Nuremberg pipe, stuffed with real Kanaster, or a large pot filled with Brunswick beer, to discuss at great length, and very learnedly, all the latest news of the province; the strangers who had come to the city; the difference between the temperature of former winters and that under which they at present shivered; with an infinity of subjects equally interesting and important. In general Wiesel played the first fiddle in all these deliberations; and, upon political subjects in particular, his decrees were looked upon as absolute. On the present occasion, however,

to the great astonishment of the honorable and intelligent assembly, he took no part in their grave discussions.

One of the principal members of this respectable club was an old lieutenant, who had lived at Birling ever since his age and infirmities had compelled him to quit the army—a period of nearly fifteen years. His chief reason for fixing his abode in this city was the moderate price of all the necessaries of life; and he could in no other have made the two-and-twenty florins per month, which his half pay produced for him, go so far, or contribute so effectually to his *otium cum dignitate.* With the exception of the trifling stakes at a game of chess, which he won daily, or rather nightly, of M. Wiesel, these two-and-twenty florins per month were his sole support. The practice of beating Wiesel at chess had given the latter a high opinion of his parts; and he was on all difficult occasions glad to avail himself of the old soldier's advice. The senator now endeavored to discover his faithful counsellor through the dense vapour, which concealed him, like one of Homer's deities, in its fragrant cloud.

"My dear captain," said Wiesel, when at length he had puffed away with his hat so much smoke as enabled him to identify the soldier's red nose—"my dear captain," (for at Birling, as well as in some other places, half-pay lieutenants

are in courtesy called captains,) "you have lived at the *residenz*, where, as I have heard you say, you have still some relations. You must therefore know better than any other person who are the people in credit at court. I beg you will do me the favour to read this letter, which I have received from our town-clerk. Tell me what you think of it. Have the miracles he relates really happened? or is he, do you think, only a crazy fool? For my own part, I confess, I am quite bewildered."

The retired warrior, whose literary talents had never been much exercised—and talents, like other bright things, will grow rusty for want of use—drew his spectacles from the bottom of his pocket, and, after wiping them slowly and carefully, he placed them on his nose, and set himself to decipher Waldau's epistle. After a quarter of an hour had been consumed in this manner, he returned it to the senator, exclaiming, "By my soul, sir, but that's very surprising!"

At this exclamation the party round the stove rose up in a body, and remained with their eyes fixed, and their mouths wide open—symptoms which, even in Germany, express the highest degree of astonishment.

"Gently, gently, my good friend," said Wiesel; "I beseech you not to let this get abroad—whisper to me only what you think of it."

"What I think of it!" said the soldier, whis-

pering into the ear of Wiesel in a tone louder than that of his exclamation—" Egad, sir, what I think of it is, that your brother has made himself master of the place, and that you must follow him through the breach. Since Waldau writes so, who can doubt it? I remember, besides, to have heard that our prince, who is a great lover of the arts, has collected in his travels I can't tell you how many artists of every description—painters, poets, players, musicians, dancers; and that he gives them all sorts of encouragement. Your brother is, perhaps, among them. At all events you must not be sleeping here, when you ought to be active elsewhere. Go, hasten to join him, and follow up the attack while there is time."

The senator thanked the brave lieutenant, whose advice he said he would follow; and promised, moreover, that his brother's influence, as far as he could direct it, should be at his friend's command.

Two hours had not elapsed from the time of this interview when the unusual sound of a postilion's horn was heard through the quiet streets of Birling. A post calêche passed rapidly through them, in which were the senator and his wife, on their way to the *residenz*.

Waldau had not dispatched his letter to the prince's favorite more than half an hour when he heard a rap at the door of his chamber. He was

still in bed; but, even if he had been dressed, the stiffness which had attended his fall would have disabled him from rising to open the door.

"Come in!" he cried; and a moment after Maurice stood in his own proper person at the foot of his bed.

His appearance was very different from that of the preceding day: there was neither lace nor any other ornament on his clothes, nor did any thing in his habit denote in the smallest degree the dignity of his station. He wore a simple walking-dress, not distinguishable from that of the commonest order of citizens.

The town-clerk of Birling rose up in his bed with a great effort, and attempted to bow: but the attempt was in vain; the nerves of his back rebelled against any such exertion in their present stiffened condition.

"Well," cried Maurice, as he eagerly embraced his old friend, "once more do we meet. The sight of thee, dear Waldau, recalls to me the recollection of those happy days of carelessness and gaiety, when all our sorrows passed like light clouds over our young hearts, and made as little impression on them. But you are silent, man. Is this your welcome to an old crony and schoolfellow after so many years' absence? Are you going to revenge upon me all the wicked pranks I have played on you, and against the remembrance of which (to use one of your own favorite

law phrases) I hoped I might now plead a limitation? I thought that length of time had been a bar to your action."

"It is, it is, indeed," said the sick man; "they are remembered no longer. *Prescripta et oblita;* and may Heaven punish me if at this moment I experience any other feelings towards you but those of respect and deference, to which"——

"Come, come, Waldau;" cried Maurice, "leave off your joking, and let us talk seriously. Your request for money, my dear fellow, has mortified me excessively, because I am in no situation to comply with it. As to your other request, I have laughed at it till my sides ached. You wish me to introduce you to the minister, and to procure for you a reduction of the tax on our native city. Tell me now, in sober sadness, whom you take me for."

"Whom do I take you for? Gracious Heaven!" cried the town-clerk, cursing in his heart all courtiers, and their intrepid assurance, "who should I take you for but for the prince's chosen friend, the prime favorite, which is better than being prime minister:—hand and glove with the chief ruler, as the report goes every where, *urbi et orbi?*"

"My poor friend," said Maurice in a consolatory tone, "you are worse than I expected to find you. It is the fever, my dear Waldau, that has filled your poor head with these odd fancies."

"Oh, yes!" replied Waldau, sarcastically, but cut to the heart's core by what he thought was an attempt to extinguish at once all the hopes he had entertained of Maurice's aid; "certainly, you are quite right—it is the fever, and these notions are illusions, *ægri somnia*. It was under the influence of the fever that I thought I saw you last night, as you strutted through the colonnade at the Felsenbourg palace in your way to the court. It was one of those cheats which an inflamed brain puts upon us that made me think I saw you glittering in lace and jewels, *gemmis atque auro*."

"You saw me going to court!"

"Yes, you, the prince's chief favorite."

"The prince's favorite! My dear Waldau, am I to laugh or to weep at these extravagances?"

"*Auri sacra fames*, the thirst of wealth will soon render you incapable of the one and the other."

"How can you have thus deceived yourself?"

"It's all very well: and the little man in black he deceived himself too; he was under the influence of a fever."

"What little man in black?"

"Why the little man who followed the superb and glittering Wiesel along the porticos of the palace."

"Ah, now I perceive what you mean," said Maurice; and, all his anxiety about his friend's sanity being removed, he burst into so immode-

rate a fit of laughter as prevented him from continuing his speech. When he recovered he said "Now I know what it is that has thus deceived you; and I find once more in you the good, simple, honest-hearted Waldau. I a courtier! I a favorite! Ah, my dear old friend, you will laugh with me now, in spite of your fever, when I tell you that I am one of a company of players at this moment engaged to act in the hotel of the old Count de Felsenbourg. Yesterday I personated, for the first time, the character of the *Confidant* in a new play; and the grave man in black, whose authority you have so solemnly quoted, is the tailor to our company. He had been just fitting me with a noble coat of scarlet serge, covered with Mannheim tinsel, and an innumerable quantity of spangles. To this simple circumstance I find I am indebted for your very pompous epistle, and for the unlooked-for respect with which you have been so good as to greet me. Now, dear Waldau, are you satisfied of what shreds and patches my *Excellency* is made up? There is only one thing which causes me to regret laying down the title with which your kindness has invested me—that is, that I shall not be able to do you much good with the minister."

"God help me!" cried Waldau, clasping his hands, and looking most ruefully, "are you really a player?"

"Indeed I am, and, as I flatter myself, not one of the worst."

"Then I am utterly undone. Your brother, the senator, will kill me at least."

Waldau's terror put an end to the mirth in which Maurice continued to indulge. He asked what caused his fear; and learnt from him that, in his haste to make M. Philip Wiesel a partaker of his brother's good fortune, he had written to him; and how great reason he had, therefore, to dread his rage, when he should discover the mistake. The disappointment and the fright together so hampered the poor town-clerk that his fever became much worse, and he was really very ill. Maurice staid with him, and rendered him all the assistance in his power. As he was handing something to the sick man from the table, his eye fell upon the letter which his brother had addressed to him. He opened it, and grieved to find from its contents that this brother was still the same unkind and unfeeling person as he had always been. His last hope had been bottomed upon the funds which he did not doubt he should receive at his father's death. They now failed him, and he was reduced to despair. He was loaded with debts, the payment of which it was impossible any longer to postpone.

"Poor Louisa!" he cried—"my promised happiness—all—all driven away by this one blow!

Waldau," he said, turning to him, "for God's sake say something consoling to me!"

Poor Waldau was, however, too much in want of consolation himself, and suffering too much pain, to have any comfortable things to say to his friend, and they both abandoned themselves to their melancholy thoughts.

The fair Louisa, whose name Maurice had just uttered, was one of the prettiest and most virtuous girls that ever adorned a station infinitely below her merits. She was the support—almost the guardian angel—of an infirm mother and of two young sisters, for whom she procured the means of existence by the labour of her own hands. The obscure five-pair-of-stairs' room, which she occupied with her family, was very

sel was received into the bosom of this interesting family, and soon looked upon as their most assiduous and indispensable friend, although he had no other letter of recommendation than his poverty. Louisa, who, the more she saw him, was the more deeply charmed with his disposition and manners, did not hesitate to avow the affection she felt for him. One evening, after they had been to the play together,—and a theatrical representation is always a main help to a lover's avowal of his passion, because it inspires him with eloquence, and softens his mistress's heart;—one evening, upon their return from the play, in which Maurice had been received (to use the phrase of the play-bills) with the most unbounded applause, he told his love to the gentle Louisa, and begged her to reward his passion by uniting her destiny to his.

The beautiful girl, with an amiable and sensible frankness which accompanied all that she did, told him she had but one objection, and that was, the narrowness of their circumstances; and that this forbade either of them to think of marrying until their fortunes should be bettered.

Maurice, sanguine as he was, could not parry this objection. He was silenced, and the lovers could only swear eternal fidelity and affection to each other. Hope and Love sealed the vows which they plighted; their hearts were so completely intoxicated with the joyful sentiment which filled them, and so perfect was their reli-

ance upon the kindness of Providence, that they already fancied they could discern a bright and glowing prospect of future felicity through the clouds which lowered about them. Alas! the letter which Maurice had just read overturned in a moment all the castles in the air which he had been so carefully building.

Poor Maurice staid with his sick friend, and, notwithstanding the dejection of his spirits, he endeavored to amuse Waldau until the evening, when his duties called him to the theatre. Before he departed he had procured an old nurse to take his place. Waldau was a little better as Maurice approached his bed to bid him farewell. The complaints of the old woman about the weather,

Waldau's words brought to the mind of Maurice the recollection of his father. The tears started into his eyes as he looked round the chamber, and saw the cloak hanging on a chair-back. He remembered that father, venerable at all times, and severe as he had been occasionally; but Maurice forgot at this moment all, save his parent's kindness and his own duty. He experienced the feeling, at once affecting and consolatory, which comes across one's heart, when, in the midst of sorrow, the recollection of a dear respected being, over whom the tomb has closed for ever, rises to one's mind. Every tinge of bitterness was purged away from it; and Maurice could have fancied, as he looked at the old well-remembered garment, that the form of his aged parent still filled it, and stretched, as he pronounced upon him a paternal benediction, the same arms which had once driven him from his home. With a bursting heart he reverently kissed the cloak, and, putting it on his shoulders, he walked out.

The quivering light of a feeble lamp threw its rays on the old nurse, whom fatigue, and the perfect tranquillity which prevailed in the warm room, soon drew to sleep. The town-clerk was kept awake by pain as well as by mental anxiety, and had no other occupation than to gaze upon the bare walls of the dismal abode to which he was confined. The perfect stillness of sound and motion which reigned throughout the chamber was

undisturbed, save by the palsied trembling of the old crone's head, which threw a shaking shadow on the curtains of the bed, and the monotonous snoring which marked her profound repose.

Waldau's disposition was eminently national: nothing suited him better than a life of perfect tranquillity, and as little noise as possible. The scene before him, therefore, was entirely to his taste, and perhaps he was not so much mistaken in his choice as some folks may be ready to imagine.

"What are the advantages," said he to himself, "of a more active life? On one side hopes arise which always end in disappointment;—on the other calumnies and undeserved injuries destroy one's best enjoyments. Is it not better, then, to repose far from tumult, beyond the reach of any injuries of mankind and the weather?"——

But it is not worth while to repeat all that the town-clerk said to himself, because the sudden entrance of the senator put an abrupt termination to his soliloquy.

"What a frightful winter this is!" said he, as he entered; "shall we never again be warm in this accursed climate?" and he raked together the nearly exhausted ashes of the fire. "But, Waldau, how did you manage to hurt yourself?—Never mind, you can tell me all about that at some other time, when we are more at leisure. But, in the first place, let me know, have you

seen my brother? Who could ever have imagined?—who could have supposed?—Well, but have you seen him?"

"He has but this moment quitted me," replied Waldau.

"Is it possible?" said the senator; "and is Maurice then well disposed towards us? is he kind and affable?"

"He is as honest and as good a fellow as ever you knew."

"Did I not say so?" cried Madame Wiesel.

"I shall not be in too great a hurry to believe it, however," said the senator: "he is a courtier, and of course he is externally polite. But, Waldau, I hope I need not ask you whether you have given him the letter which I wrote in such haste."

"Oh, no," replied Waldau; "it lies here upon the table."

Wiesel approached the spot which Waldau pointed out:—he looked in vain for the letter. "Search your pockets, Waldau," he said; "you must have it there:" and, without waiting, he set about rummaging the pockets of the town-clerk's clothes, which were lying near his bed.

"It is possible," said Waldau, in great agitation, "that it may have fallen into your brother's hands."

"Good Heaven! and can you lie there quietly while you utter so dreadful a suppo-

sition? A thousand curses upon you!——He has read it, and is filled with rage at its contents. I shall go mad."

"Be quiet," said Waldau; "don't put yourself in so great a passion. It is of no consequence."

"Not in a passion! of no consequence! I tell you, sir, it is of the very last consequence, and that I must immediately go and"—— Without waiting to finish his speech, the senator rushed out of the room and into the street, which, notwithstanding the heavy snow-storm that raged, he was traversing at a rapid pace, before the town-clerk had recovered from the astonishment that his transport had excited, or had time to explain to him the discovery he had but recently hit upon.

was crowded to the ceiling. The box-keeper told the senator, in answer to his inquiries, that there was but one box unoccupied, which, being very near to the stage, had been rejected by every one who came with no other intention than to see the performance. Mr. Philip, however, had no objection to it on this account, because he was not too fond of the drama at any time; and, upon the present occasion particularly, his object was only to meet with his brother. He was therefore glad to get this seat, which commanded a good view of the whole house. His eyes were anxiously directed to each of the boxes which seemed to contain distinguished personages; but he could not discern his brother in any one of them. He was surprised at this, although it was occasioned by one of the simplest and most satisfactory reasons in the world,—Maurice was then behind the scenes, preparing for his entrance on the stage.

At length the curtain was drawn up. The scene represented a wild mountainous country; and the feeble light, and the noise of the rustling wind, conveyed to the audience the impression that a storm was then raging. The senator was a very sagacious personage at Birling, but he was not in the habit of seeing and comprehending dramatic spectacles; and a certain feeling of terror took possession of him. The flashes of ignited rosin, which mimicked the flashes of

lightning, filled him with apprehension; and, before he had recovered the effect of the first impression which the scene had made on him, his attention was absorbed by the sight of a figure, which was only dimly visible by the uncertain and fitful blazes of the storm. As he gazed at it he trembled—his hair stood erect—his nerves quivered—his whole frame was convulsed. The figure advanced; and to his surprise and horror he recognised in it his own father. It was too exact and faithful a representation of his aged parent to admit of a doubt. There stood the venerable man, just as he had appeared the moment before he was seized with a fit of apoplexy on his return from a journey; of which attack he expired in the arms of his son. The same old grey cloak was wrapped about him, his features were precisely the same, and the same white hairs and beard excited once again the respect and veneration of his son. He looked at it almost petrified with horror, while, to add to his confusion, the phantom advanced, and, fixing its stern eyes upon him, in thrilling accents charged him with having defrauded his brother of his birthright.

Remorse and terror froze Philip's heart within his bosom: he could bear no more, but rushed out of the box in perfect distraction. He ran along the corridors, and precipitately entered another box, the door of which he found open. Two young ladies were sitting in it, to whom he

apologized somewhat incoherently for his intrusion, and begged, at the same time, that he might be permitted to retain the seat he had taken with so little ceremony. This was readily accorded him; and the appearance of the lights, no less than the amiable cheerfulness of his young companions, soon restored his self-possession. He saw the adventure of the stage in its proper light, and believed that he had been terrified only by an accidental resemblance, and by the novelty of the spectacle. By way of making a favorable impression on the ladies, he mentioned the name of his brother, who, he thought, as the prince's favorite, must be known to all the world. The effect of this was perfectly magical, and answered his warmest expectations. The ladies were Louisa and one of her young acquaintances. She looked at him with a charming smile as she asked—"Are you, sir, the brother of that M. Wiesel who is so generally admired and applauded?"

A loud military symphony prevented the senator from giving any lengthened explanation; and he said merely, "Yes, madame, I am his brother."

The play proceeded; and Louisa, who was very naturally desirous to make herself agreeable to her future brother-in-law, turning round, said to him—"It is very provoking that they have given him so bad a part. You will, however, see

that he will make it very striking, inferior as it is."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Philip, leaning forward, and in some confusion; for, as he spoke, he saw the object of his recent terror again appear on the stage at the head of a troop of Helvetian mountaineers. He wore the old grey cloak no longer, but was clad in the ancient picturesque costume of the period at which the scene of the drama was laid.

"There," said Louisa, pointing to Maurice—for it was he—"do you not recognise him? And here you will find his name," she said, handing him a bill, in which he read "Conrad Hunn, one of the conspirators, *M. Wiesel.*"

This was too much for any man, even if he should happen to be a senator, to bear. Mr. Philip was now more distressed than ever at the supposed apparition of his father. He leant back against a pillar of the box in a most unenviable frame of mind. All the visions that he had indulged in were demolished at one blow:—the wealth, the place, the dignities, which he had, as it were, in his very grasp, were melted into thin air;—all had fled away, "like the baseless fabric of a vision," and the spell was dissolved by the mere appearance of the *Conspirator* Conrad Hunn! Confusion, and a rage which bordered on despair, took possession of his soul as the truth flashed

upon him. He quitted Louisa and her companion with no less abruptness than he had joined them, and rushed through the streets (now almost deserted) in a state of indescribable anger. The cold night-blast howled in his ears, and its sharp whispers sounded to him like the suggestions of an evil spirit. They could not be those of a good one, for they seemed to insinuate that he could do nothing more discreet or meritorious than to kill the poor town-clerk out of hand, who had, however innocently, been the cause of all this mistake.

Madame Wiesel had remained, on her husband's abrupt departure, at the bedside of the invalid Waldau. Her assiduous kindness, and, perhaps, not less her amiable and gentle manners, had done so much towards Waldau's recovery, that upon the physician's return he expressed his surprise at the amendment of his patient, and, after prescribing some slight potion, withdrew.

He had scarcely disappeared when Maurice entered. The joy with which he met his sister-in-law was rapturous and mutual. She had been the companion of his earliest and happiest years; and time, and the intimate connexion which her marriage with his brother had formed, had cemented their attachment.

"Then," said Maurice, after the first congratulations were over, "I was not mistaken; it

was my brother whom I saw this evening at the theatre, and who looked at me, I am sorry to say, as if he would have eaten me."

"But what did he say to you, Maurice?" asked Madame Wiesel.

"He did not say any thing," replied Maurice. "When I quitted Waldau this afternoon I was in low spirits, and rather agitated. I went to the theatre, where I had to play a character well adapted to the temper of my mind. In a scene which represented a storm I had to deliver a speech, in which there is this sentence:

'Has he not foully wronged his father's son?
Does he not, even now, with false pretence
And most unnatural fraud, retain that wealth
Which justice, and the country's righteous laws,

all will turn out for the best. Your veins are filled with the same blood;—the bond of fraternal affection may be loosened, but cannot be broken. He is your senior, Maurice; submit, I implore you, to what he may require: besides which he is, as perhaps you do not know, a senator; and, whatever you may think, I can tell you he has the law on his side. Take example by the patience and forbearance which Mary always displays."

Maurice needed none of Waldau's exhortations; for to contend with his brother was the last thing in the world he could have been prevailed on to do. He turned round to his sister-in-law, and, once more embracing her, he put on his cloak, as he went out to the apothecary's shop, to procure the necessary ingredients for the prescription which the physician had left.

As he entered the shop his attention was particularly attracted by an old woman, who was going in at the same moment. She was bent almost double with age, and her eyes, which were of a singular brightness, were fixed upon him. He was too much busied with the errand that brought him thither to think long of the old woman, and applied immediately to one of the persons in the shop for the articles he wanted. He was, however, obliged to look round, for the old crone had taken hold of the top of his grey cloak, and was passing her hand slowly and

earnestly over the almost threadbare plush of which the collar was made.

"Don't stir, child," said she, as Maurice drew back for the purpose of putting an end to a familiarity which he did not like.

"What do you see on my cloak, my good old woman?" he asked; "there are no insects at this time of the year."

Maurice looked, as he spoke, at the old woman, whose shrivelled and discoloured features formed a strong contrast to the benevolent vivacity which seemed to animate them, and which made her look like one of the subjects of Gerard Douw's best pictures.

"Is it a spider that you have found in the cloak?" asked the apothecary. "I hope it is, for that is a certain prognostic of riches to the person who wears it. It is, indeed:" he added, as Maurice shrugged his shoulders incredulously.

The old woman laughed, but said nothing; and went away with the purchase she had made. Maurice, having also dispatched his business, quitted the shop. As he passed along the street he heard a voice behind him, which he recognised for that of the old woman.

"Hist!—young man, I have a neighbour, an old clothes' man: your cloak is just such a thing as he would like to buy;—will you part with it?"

"Go along, you old witch," replied Maurice,

"and sell yourself to him, if you have such an inclination to make bargains."

"Why, what can you see in such a rag to be fond of it?"

"Rag or not, I have a value for it."

"But, at least, yon must confess it is not for its beauty that you wish to keep it."

"Why then, if you must know, you inquisitive old woman, it is because this cloak is all that I have left of my father's property."

"Your father's!—ah, my child, you do well to honour his memory; for any one can tell you are his own son: you are like him in every feature, only that there is a good-tempered smile at the corner of your mouth, which he never had."

"Yes, yes, he had the same smile once, but the troubles of the world had worn it away."

"Say, rather, that time had done so; time, that does so much mischief. I am sure I have reason to complain of it, for, if it had heaped threescore years less on my old head, you would not let me be standing, exposed to the driving snow, here in the street. Oh, no! you would long ere this have flung your cloak over my shoulders.——"

"Go along, you old gipsy; with such nymphs as you one is in no danger of temptation."

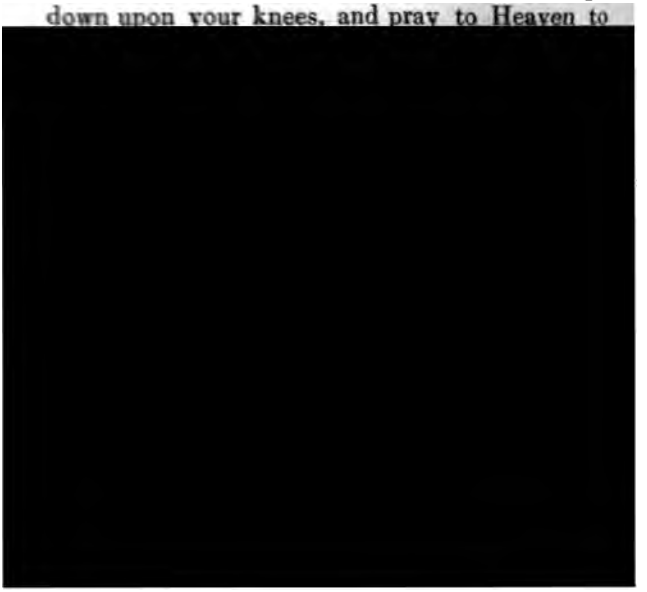
"Never mind, my child; I cannot say much for your complaisance, though I like your frankness, and will reward it."

"You may keep your reward to yourself; I assure you I don't want it."

"How naturally that word *want* comes out of a man's mouth when his head is filled with thinking of it!"

"Who are you, old hag?" cried Maurice, pulling her, half angry and half in jest, under a lamp which was just by.

"There is nothing in my wrinkled face to repay the pains you are taking to look at it, my child: perhaps, however, my advice may be more serviceable to you. Listen to me then;—get home and go into your chamber; fasten the door after you; and, having done so, rip open the collar of your cloak: when you have done all this, go down upon your knees, and pray to Heaven to



would be the most natural thing imaginable for such a man to convert his money into paper, which he could so easily conceal. I have no doubt that the old woman whom Maurice met was in the secret—some old hostess, or housekeeper, or something of that kind—and that she knew the old gentleman used his cloak as a strong box. He was a better hand at amassing ducats than managing a needle; and he must needs have had recourse to some female assistance. You know it was immediately upon his return from one of his journeys that he died so suddenly. Make haste, Mary, and rip open the collar; there are scissors in my bag. No scruples, Maurice; the money is yours *proprio jure*."

Madame Wiesel took the cloak, and exclaimed, joyfully, "that she was sure she felt papers within the lining." At this moment Maurice got up: "Do you not hear a noise?" he said: "there is a confusion of voices rushing like a torrent towards us."

"There is, indeed, a tumult," said Waldau. "Why do you tremble so, Mary?—Go out, Maurice, and see what it is."

Maurice went out, and returned almost immediately, pale and out of breath. Before, however, the cause of his sudden agitation is explained, it will be necessary to go back a little.

When Philip rushed out from the Felsenbourg hotel he was almost in a state of desperation.

He could not dismiss from his memory the terrific phantom of the stage: an invisible power prompted him to restore to his brother a share of the four thousand florins which he had found among his father's effects at the old gentleman's death. It seemed in vain that he resisted; and his conscience, which had too often and too long lain asleep, would not now be quieted.

Philip, as is commonly the practice with men suffering unusual agitation, sought to overcome the violence of his feelings by the rapidity of his movements. He was striding along, not knowing whither he went, when his evil destiny, or his distraction, led him to the edge of the canal, which was at this time thinly frozen over; but so much so, that it appeared, by the dim light which then prevailed, like a solid surface. The wretched man, at the first step, plunged beneath the ice. He was quickly drawn out by some persons who happened to be passing. He breathed still; but he had only time to say where he was dwelling, when he expired, death-stricken by the sudden cold of the water, and went to answer for his sins before a tribunal where justice is tempered with the most tender mercy.

It would be impossible to describe the grief and horror of the party at the inn when the pale cold corpse of Philip was brought in. Notwithstanding the slender claims which the deceased

had upon their sympathy and affection, nothing but the best and most amiable points of his character were now recollected, and they bewailed his loss as if he had been all that he ought to have been.

Among the disasters of this night, too, the loss of the cloak, about which so much expectation had been roused, was not the least. It had been carried off, as was thought, by one of the many persons who pressed into the room when Philip's body was brought in. Maurice made the most diligent search for it in every part of the city, but all his inquiries and his offers of reward were alike in vain.

Madame Wiesel returned to Birling, accompanied by Waldau. Soon after her arrival there Maurice received from her a packet, containing a very considerable share of the property which her husband had left. This generosity delighted, but did not astonish, Maurice. He immediately disposed of the larger part of the money in payment of his numerous debts. Relieved of this burden, by which one of the chief obstacles which lay in the way of his marriage with Louisa was removed, he saw once more revived the dawn of that happiness which he had before feared was for ever annihilated.

It almost always happens, in the affairs of this world, that, when a man's ill luck gets a sudden check, it seems to grow tired of pursuing him,

and lets him enjoy, undisturbed, all the good fortune which may fall to his share. Thus it was with Maurice, whose affairs, revived by his sister-in-law's generosity, now looked up, and went on rather prosperously. He was anxious to return to Birling, where he proposed to establish himself; but he had resolved not to revisit his household gods until he could crown them with myrtles; or, in plain language, until he could carry his dear Louisa home as his bride.

His diligence and good fortune, in little more than a year, enabled him to do this; and, about a month after his mourning for his brother had expired, the next ensuing Sunday was fixed upon for his marriage.

Weddings, like some other things, never come alone: Waldau, the simple honest-hearted Waldau, had been making himself as agreeable as he could to the good widow Wiesel, and had prevailed upon her to give him her hand on the same day that should unite Louisa to Maurice. The double wedding was celebrated with that frank and sincere, though somewhat rude joviality, which distinguished the times when folks were less refined, but not a jot less happy, than they are now. An old crystal cup, which had been for ages a chief instrument in all the merry-makings of the Wiesel family, went briskly about, and was by turns filled with sparkling Johannisberg or the perfumed Wertheimer; for

the unsocial practice of every drinker having a separate glass had not then reached the remote city of Birling.

In the evening a dance crowned the festivities of the day. Maurice displayed on his finger a valuable ring which the prince had given as a testimony of the admiration which his talents had excited in playing Don Carlos before him. If his highness had seen him on this occasion, he would have given him a pension; for the smiles of his Louisa excited him beyond all that he had felt before, and he played his part on this occasion a thousand times better than ever he had done, and looked as full of grace and nobleness as the Infanta himself. His gaiety seemed to diffuse itself throughout the company; and the laughter of himself and his guests was as loud as the music. Waldau was just about to lead off a dance with Louisa, and Mary and Maurice had taken their places next to them, when Maurice felt his sister-in-law's hand tremble as he held it within his own.

"What is the matter with you, Mary?" he asked; "what has terrified you? what is it that you are looking at?"

"Do you not see, Maurice," she replied, looking towards the door.

"No," he said, "I see nothing."

"Yonder—standing in the door-way—and wrapped in your father's cloak."

Maurice looked again, and saw in a moment that the object which had attracted his sister's notice was the same old woman whom he had met with in the apothecary's shop at Felsenbourg. She wore the very grey cloak which had disappeared in so unaccountable a manner. He ran to her immediately, and drew her into the middle of the room.

"Who are you, old witch?" he cried, shaking her gently; "what do you do with this cloak? and what brings you here? Speak quickly."

"You ask me so many questions at once!" said the old woman, laughing at him, and shaking her palsied head. "It is your lucky star that brings me here. As to the cloak—that is my own, for I bought it."

Maurice looked at her, and thought that the old woman had found the cloak and the money which it contained, and that now she was come to make a merit of restoring to him such part as she chose.

The old woman seemed to guess at the thoughts which passed through his head. "Giddy boy that you are," she said, "why did you despise my advice? Why did you so carelessly throw away this precious cloak? I found it one day hanging in the shop of my neighbour, the old clothes' man, who told me he bought it of a porter. But, pray, tell me what you think would have become of the bills, to the amount of twenty

thousand florins, which were sewed up in the collar, if I had not bought them and it for the exorbitant price of three crowns? There," she added, handing a packet to him at the same time that she threw off the cloak, "take them; and thank Heaven that your father's nurse has lived to restore his property to you."

"Were you, then, my father's nurse?"

"Yes, my child, I was; but it is a long while ago, and we can talk about that when you have nothing else to do. Be grateful to Heaven; be virtuous, and you will always be protected by Providence. Be a good husband—and now go on with your dancing."

"It is old Christina!" cried Waldau, who had drawn near.

"Yes, it is, indeed, old Christina," said the old woman, laughing at him—"old enough to remember your vows of eternal constancy to the councillor's niece. Oh fie, Waldau!"

"Don't blame him," said Maurice; "the love which he now professes is returned, and the other, you know, was not."

"May Heaven bless you, my children!" exclaimed the old woman. "But, come, I don't mean to quit you any more—that is, if you will spare me a corner somewhere among you; and I can tell you I have not lived so long without scraping up something towards boiling the pot."

"Oh!" cried Mary, with that amiable warmth

which was her character, and making a place for the old woman to sit down, "you shall never quit us."

In a very few days old Christina was a member of the family, and seemed as much at home as if she had never lived any where else. The two couples lived in the same house, and looked upon her as a sort of common grandmother. Their happiness was of that pure and uninterrupted kind which springs from the practice of the virtues of humble life. Piety, innocence, and goodness, marked their career, and their days had passed in a peaceful uniformity, when, about a year after her sudden appearance, old Christina one morning opened the door of Maurice's room, and stood wrapped up in the same grey cloak

My grandmother's story being finished, she said—

"Now, then, my dear Harry, as your last effort has been unanimously decided to be insufficient—*a coup manqué*—you must try again, and we shall all listen patiently to your story."

"Yes, Harry," said Elizabeth; "and mind that it *is* your own—not any of your Italian friends', if you please. We look for it out of your own head, and not from any old-fashioned little book."

"Your expectations, dear Elizabeth," replied Harry, "are, like those of a great many other ladies, somewhat unreasonable; and my exertions, like those of many other gentlemen, will, I fear, fall short of satisfying them. It is, I know, quite in vain for me to appeal against the sentence which has been pronounced upon me, and it is therefore useless to complain of it; but remember that I do always solemnly protest against its injustice."

"You shall have the full benefit of your protest," said the attorney; "and you are enough of a lawyer to know what that is."

"It is exactly what one lawyer may expect

to receive from the hands of another—nothing. But you, my dear Elizabeth, seem more unreasonable than any other of our friends here, for you ask me to tell you a story out of my own head. Do you remember, my love, that the world has now been created something more than five thousand years, and that all its various successions of inhabitants have been employed in telling stories during the whole of that period? and yet can you ask me to tell a new one? In the name of every thing that is fair—I don't mean pretty, but honest—is such a request to be complied with? And yet, I think, I might undertake to do so if you would promise to show me one story, properly called original, that has been writ-

"It might, perhaps, do so, if you would begin it," said my grandmother; "but you are always playing some trick or other to put off the moment of commencement."

"For once," my dear madam," replied Harry, "I am innocent of the charge you bring against me, because it is not I who am to begin."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, indeed it is," was uttered from nearly every body present.

"Patience, my good friends and gentle cousins—patience for a moment, and hear me explain. I am very desirous not again to incur your censure; but the truth is that I cannot at this moment recollect any thing that will satisfy you and restore my credit, which seems to have fallen unaccountably, and, as I think, undeservedly, in your estimation. I am literally in the case of Mr. Canning's needy Knife-grinder, and may truly say,

'Story! Lord bless you! I have none to tell you.'"

"This will not do, Harry," said every body again.

"Not so fast," said Harry; "I only ask a respite until to-morrow; and, in the mean time, I have prevailed upon my uncle, whose turn comes next to mine, to tell his story instead of me."

"Oh, that is a different thing!" was exclaimed; and the proposed substitute seemed to give universal satisfaction.

"Yes," said my uncle, disposing his gouty foot

upon the cushion, "Harry was making signals of distress; so I spoke with him. He told me he'd never a yarn ready to splice on to madam's (meaning my grandmother); and so I promised to overhaul my log for him, and to see whether I couldn't stand his friend."

"Oh, dear uncle," cried Elizabeth, "I shall be delighted: I never heard you tell a story."

"That's a——mistake, my love. You've heard me tell how I was cast away off the coast of Coromandel; and you've heard me tell about the blue lights that we saw on the shrouds the night that Admiral Duncan died; and"——

"Oh, yes, I've heard you tell an innumerable quantity of little anecdotes like those; but then,

"When you have finished your embraces," said my grandmother, "perhaps, Hugh, you will let us have your story."

"With all my heart, mother," replied the captain; "but, first of all, if you please, I must tell you how I came by it. It isn't mine, and I scorn to sail under false colours. It's a story, though, which you never heard before; and, although I did'nt make it, I know the man that did. The goods are of the right sort; and, though they are brought in by a different ship from the owner's, that's nothing at all to you. This tale, then, which I am now going to begin, was written by an old schoolfellow and messmate of mine. You knew Charley Russell, mother?" turning to my grandmother.

"Oh, yes," replied the old lady—"you mean the poor boy whom you enticed, or who enticed you, to run away from school."

"The very same—a light-haired curly-headed chap. Ah! it might be very wrong to run away from school, and I dare say it was; but I only wish, mother, you'd ever been for half a year to Scourge's grammar-school, and then you'd see how you would like being flogged every day, whether you deserved it or no."

"I'm very much obliged to you, Hugh," said my grandmother; "but, without any such painful experience, I am quite ready to believe that you were very cruelly treated. But you know it

was your own fault, for you never complained to any of us."

"No," said the captain, "I scorned to complain; and I thought it was better to break old Scourge's head, and to run away."

"And were you so naughty, uncle, as to run away from school?" asked Elizabeth.

"Why, yes, I was so naughty, as you call it, my dear; and I'll just tell you how it happened. Old Scourge was uncommonly fond of a nasty book which I hated: he called it the 'Latin Grammar,' and he wanted to make me learn it. Well, he wasn't the first that tried to do the same thing; but he had no better luck than other folks. I wasn't more than twelve years old when I went aboard his ship—his school, I mean—and he tried me for a whole year, but I could'nt or wouldn't (hang me if I know which) learn a word. Then he took to beating it into me; and every morning, before breakfast, he used to give me a regular starting if I couldn't say the lesson. I did not like the starting, but then I knew my head wasn't built to carry such a cargo as he wanted to put aboard of it; and I thought it was as well not to lose my time; so I made up my mind not to learn a word. Well, he went on flogging for a good while, until we both of us got tired; but I was tired first. I had been reading the 'Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner,' and took a main

liking to the sea. Charley Russell, who was an orphan, and at the same school, had a notion of a similar kind; and Charley and I used to lay our heads together, and plot about deserting and going to sea. Well, after talking about it a great many times, at length we agreed to do it, and a morning was fixed. Charley proposed to set off before the other boys got up: but I couldn't bring myself to leave old Scourge without thanking him for all the good turns he had done me; so I persuaded Charley to go by himself, and to wait for me at a village about five miles from the school. The morning came, and we had made up a bundle containing our joint stock, which was not very large. I let my messmate down into the garden by the sheets of our bed, and then dropped the bundle. He set off unperceived; and, when I had thrown an old shoe after him for luck, I crept back to bed, and lay there till the bell rung. When I went down there was the old story over again: Scourge wanted me to decline (as he called it) something about *Dominus, Domini*, and I had resolved to decline it altogether. He made signals to me to unbutton:—I told him I'd see him ——. No, I did not say that; but I told him I wouldn't. He came down from the quarter-deck, where he always stood in the morning, and was going to bear down upon me. I saw his manœuvres; and, just as he came, I laid hold of the leaden inkstand that belonged to

our mess, and heaved it with all my might point blank at his head. It not only hit him, but, to my astonishment, brought him down. I didn't stay to ask if he was hurt, but leaped out of the window, which I had taken the precaution to have wide open;—and this was my first step into the world.

"I need not tell you that I ran; for, when I saw the blood and the ink streaming down old Scourge's face, I thought, to be sure, that I must have killed him. I kept on at full speed; and, as my legs and my lungs were both rather better then than they are now, I soon joined Charley Russell, whom I found waiting for me at our rendezvous.

"The account which I gave him of my engagement with Scourge made him think we had better set off as soon as possible; and, the 'Liverpool Fly Coach' coming up soon afterwards, we got births aboard of her, and went on to Liverpool.

"There was a fair-spoken squinting sort of a fellow on deck alongside of us, who contrived, in the twinkling of one of his own eyes, to learn that we were two youngsters who wanted to go on board a ship. We told him some long story about our parents being dead, and so on: and he believed just as much of it as was true; and that was no great matter, you may guess. However, he said he thought he could get us a birth, and began to talk about the delights of a sailor's

life, and beating the French, and getting to be a captain of a ship, and having one's fortune made by prize-money, and other like rigmaroles, until we were both stark mad to be aboard.

"By his advice we went to lodge at the sign of the 'Admiral Benbow,' in Crooked Billet Lane, which, if you know the town of Liverpool, you'll be sure is neither so pleasant nor so genteel as Grosvenor Square, in London. Here he introduced us to an ill-looking fellow, with a wooden leg, whom he called Captain Sprit, and who, he said, was commander of the 'Lovely Sally,' a fine merchant vessel. The moment I set my eyes on this fellow, I thought, young as I was, that he must be a rascal. He wore a greasy cocked hat; his coat had belonged to a naval officer, but had suffered in the hands of some of the Jews who had owned it before it came to our new friend's turn to mount it, and it enjoyed now but a very scanty share of its original lace; a pair of mariner's canvass trowsers, made as large as a petticoat, and reaching to his knees—light blue worsted stockings, with red clocks—and a pair of pewter buckles, nearly as large as gridirons, stuck into shoes that might have fitted an elephant—composed the costume of this captain, as he chose to entitle himself. His nose was in shape like a thick mushroom, broad and flat, and spread over his face: its colour was a deep tawny red; but it was so variegated with lumps and pimples, of purple,

green, and yellow, that it looked for all the world like a bunch of withered flowers. He was beetle-browed, and wore a black patch over his left eye. His mouth was like a fish's; and one of his cheeks was constantly filled with an enormous quid of tobacco. An ancient silver brooch fastened his shirt-collar; and, as he wore no handkerchief, his ugly bull's throat, very rarely, and, at the best, very imperfectly shaved, was always exposed. His legs were as ill matched as can be imagined: for one of them was as bandy as a hoop; the other was made of a stout perpendicular piece of timber, which supplied the place of the deficient limb. He was one of the most powerful men I ever saw; and the loss of his leg seemed hardly to have impaired his strength.

"When he entered the room in which we were sitting he stared impudently at each of us; and, after he had satisfied himself with looking, he roared out 'What cheer, messmates?'

"I was quite at a loss what reply to make to this salutation; but I believed that he was some great naval officer at least, for impudence has a kind of imposing effect upon every body, to say nothing of two such lads as Charley Russell and I.

"Charley had the gift of the gab; so he got up, and made a low bow and a long speech, telling the captain how he wished to enter the navy.

"'Belike you do, brother,' said the captain,

as soon as Charley had made an end of his palaver—'Belike you do; but let me just overhaul you a bit, and see what you can do. Have you ever been aboard ship?'

"'No,' said Charley.

"'Why, then, mayhap, you can't neither hand nor reef, nor steer.'

"We were obliged again to confess we could not.

"'Nor I dare say you can't splice a rope, nor raise a perpendicular.'

"We knew just as much about finding the longitude as of doing any one of the things the captain asked us about. I felt that we were confoundedly gravelled; so I stepped up to him, and said it was true we couldn't do much, but that we were very young, and willing to learn.

"'Well said, mate!' cried the old boy; 'and, if I was to larn you, I dare say you might make a taught fellow. But you would be of no use on board a king's ship now;—they wouldn't have you at a gift.'

"This was disheartening, and seemed to be a death-blow to our hopes. Charley and I looked ruefully at each other; and I was still more frightened than Charley, because I thought I discerned a distant prospect of being hanged in case I should be caught; for that I had killed the Scourge I never dreamt of doubting.

"The captain was a cunning old thief, and saw our embarrassment, of which he was not slow in taking advantage.

"'Now,' said he, 'if you'd like a trip to the West Indies, in as pretty a ship as ever danced over the salt sea ocean, I could accommodate you.'

"I looked at Charley, and saw by the glistening of his eyes that he was delighted with this proposal. All that we wished for was to go to sea; and we did not care much as to the manner, simply because we knew nothing at all about the affair.

"'Many's the fine young fellow that I've made a good sailor of,' continued the captain; 'and, if

"When we had taken as much of this stuff as he thought sufficient for his purpose he called for some brandy, and, filling a glass for each of us, 'Now, lads,' he said, 'I'll teach you the first thing a seaman larns; that is, to splice the main brace.—Do as I do;' and he swallowed the contents of his glass at a single gulp.

"We obeyed him without hesitation, and this finished our business. We were as completely drunk as any two youngsters in Christendom. The captain then produced some papers, which he told us contained an engagement to sail with him to the West Indies, and he asked us to sign them. If we had been sober, we should not, I dare say, have refused; and, drunk as we were, we signed without looking at the papers, and without hesitation.

"'Now boys,' said the captain, 'I recommend you to turn in to your births, and take a snooze: I'll come and pipe you out of your hammocks betimes to-morrow; and then aboard the Lovely Sally, and hey for the West Indies!' After this advice he squeezed our hands in his horny palm, which was very like a bear's foot, and bade us good night.

"We got to bed as well as we could, and the next morning each of us awoke with a horrible head-ache. The thoughts, however, of the new life that we were about to begin, were so delightful to our boyish fancies, that we cared little for

this inconvenience; and, after breakfasting with our new friend, we went aboard the 'Lovely Sally.'

"Notwithstanding our inclination to view every thing in the best light, we couldn't help thinking the ship was very small, and, by the side of some of the vessels we saw in the port, a very shabby-looking concern. We had little time, however, now to reflect upon this, or any thing else, as the preparations for getting the ship out, and for sailing, gave us sufficient employment. A fresh breeze sprung up, and we soon lost sight of the shore.

"The ship's crew consisted of six men, besides our old friend of the preceding night, and a lank, ill-looking person, who seemed to have a supreme

said this the old villain thrust his tongue into the cheek that was not filled with tobacco, and winked at the tall man, who laughed aloud, and, swearing at me worse than before, said, if I didn't obey him, 'he'd make every beam in my body crack.'

"I was taken all aback in a moment, and began to suspect we had been trepanned. I thought it was better to take his advice, particularly when I saw the admiral, as he called him, grasp his cudgel resolutely; and so I did as I was bid. I then went in search of Charley; and, upon imparting my suspicions to him, I found that he had formed a similar opinion. To our further astonishment we made for the shore on the close of the same day; and as soon as the night had set in, and the corn, which appeared to form our cargo, had been removed, a quantity of barrels were taken from under it, and were lowered into a boat, in which the admiral, with all the crew, excepting the old captain, placed themselves, and rowed away. I then began to ask the old fellow what this meant, and why we didn't keep on our course for the West Indies.

"'West Indies!' said he;—'oh, don't be in a hurry; you're young yet, and have plenty of time to go to the West Indies before you die.'

"'Yes,' I said; 'but you know we engaged to go to the West Indies.'

"'I tell you what, brother,' said he, 'you're a

likely lad, and I'll let you into a secret. We an't going to the West Indies at all; and, if you take my advice, you'll do your work, and hold your tongue. This here Lovely Sally is a little coaster, and you're apprenticed to the owner of her for seven years: that's the owner that's gone ashore, and I'm no more a captain than you are; and we do a trifle of smuggling when we can, wherewith the captain has now gone ashore to land some brandy; and we were mainly in want of two boys, whereby I bound you apprentice to the owner; and now, whether you like it or no, you must stay.'

"My rage at this news, and at the coolness with which the old ruffian told it to me, almost

birch was a mere pastime to it. I found that we had got amongst a crew of free traders, who, under the pretence of carrying corn along the coast, supplied all sorts of contraband and run goods to smugglers on shore, in various parts of the kingdom.

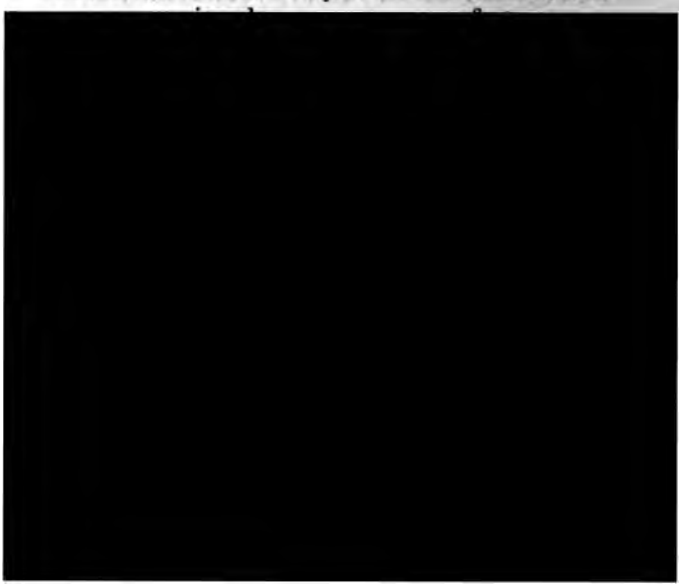
"For nearly a year this went on, and during the whole of the time we had not the most distant chance of escaping. Whenever the ship went into port we were kept on deck, and generally down below. The owner never staid longer than was absolutely necessary, and seemed at no time so safe or so happy as when he was away from the English coast, for which I dare swear he had many good reasons. To write to our friends was impossible; and any attempt to remonstrate met with a kick or a starting from the lank owner, and some blackguard jests from old Sprit.

"In the mean time Charley and I learnt something of the business of a ship; and, as we were always ready to console each other in our difficulties, things were not so bad as they might have been. At length our fate was changed, but not much for the better.

"One morning, when we were standing off Guernsey, a sail hove in sight, which was believed to be a French privateer; and, as our owner hated those gentry worse than any thing in the world, excepting the king's cutters, we prepared to escape from her as fast as possible. This

was, however, soon found to be impracticable; and a consultation was held between the owner and the crew, in which, of course, neither Charley nor I had any share, as to what should be done.

"The privateer gained upon us; and, as we did not slacken sail, she sent a shot right through our bows. Like a thoughtless brat, as I was, I thought this was the beginning of some good fun; and, calling Charley, we went below, where there was a large old swivel gun, that had long been dismounted. This gun we carefully loaded with nails and bolts, and whatever else we could find; and, mounting it on a chest and table, and pointing it through the cabin window, we resolved to have a slap at the Frenchman, who



"'Let us have a slap at the man in the wig,' said Charley, as he pointed the old gun towards him.

"'With all my heart,' said I; and, every thing being ready, I clapped the match to the touch-hole.

"The gun went off, and one of the bolts with which it was loaded damaged the wig at which it was aimed, by carrying away one half of it, and a great part of the wearer's head. This I learnt afterwards, for the charge was so great that the gun burst, and knocked Charley and me down upon the cabin floor, where we lay senseless, and did not recover until the 'Lovely Sally' was in the possession of the Frenchmen. The most disastrous consequence of our firing did not end here: the captain of the privateer came on board of us; and, exasperated at the loss of his officer, (for the gentleman in the wig was his lieutenant,) having ascertained who was the commander of our ship, he walked coolly up to the lank owner, and discharged a brace of bullets through his head. This being done, he asked who had fired the gun; and he was told by the crew that it had gone off by accident in the cabin; and, as a proof of it, he was shown Charley and myself, where we were lying stunned by the bursting of the gun. He believed this story, and contented himself with putting the whole of us in irons; and then, removing us on board his own ship, he carried us,

in the course of the next day, to the port of Cherbourg.

"Every one of the 'Lovely Sally's' crew, excepting Charley and I, were full of sorrow at this disaster. We could not see any reason to grieve at changing a prison on shore for a prison at sea; but, on the contrary, we were rather glad of it. Our light-heartedness gave great offence to our messmates; and this, of course, increased our mirth. Their authority was at an end, and we didn't care a rope's end for all of them put together.

"'You unnatural young dog,' said old Sprit to me, 'you haven't a drop of English blood in your veins, or you'd cry your eyes out at going to be made a slave of by these here wooden-shod frogs

however, that my hint had raised me in his estimation. 'You devil's imp,' he said, 'you've larnt summat since I saw you first at the Admiral Benbow.'

"'Yes, captain,' I said; 'and, if my learning shouldn't be to your taste, thank the man that taught me,'

"'And is this all the reward I'm to get, you swab?'

"'Good words, captain,' said I; 'nobody's afraid of you now, and you'd better be friends.'

"'Friends!' said he; 'I'm the best friend you ever had:—give us your hand, and let's stand by each other.'

"I shook hands with the old rogue, whose whimsicality made me like him in spite of the trick he had played us; and who, to do him justice, had saved me from many a starting at the hands of our friend who had been lately shot. We were upon a much better understanding by the time we landed; and, by way of cementing our friendship, I suppose, accident decreed that we should be locked up in the same dungeon in the prison of Cherbourg.

"None but those persons who have been in a French prison can form any notion of its horrors. I shall not distress you by telling all the miseries we endured, but leave you to guess at them when you know that we were as wretched as hard labour, little food, and that of the worst descrip-

tion, and very scanty clothing in a bitter hard winter, could make us. We resolved to escape if we could; and since Charley and I, after some months' imprisonment, had learnt so much French that we could speak it, as we thought, like the natives, we soon contrived to put our plan in execution.

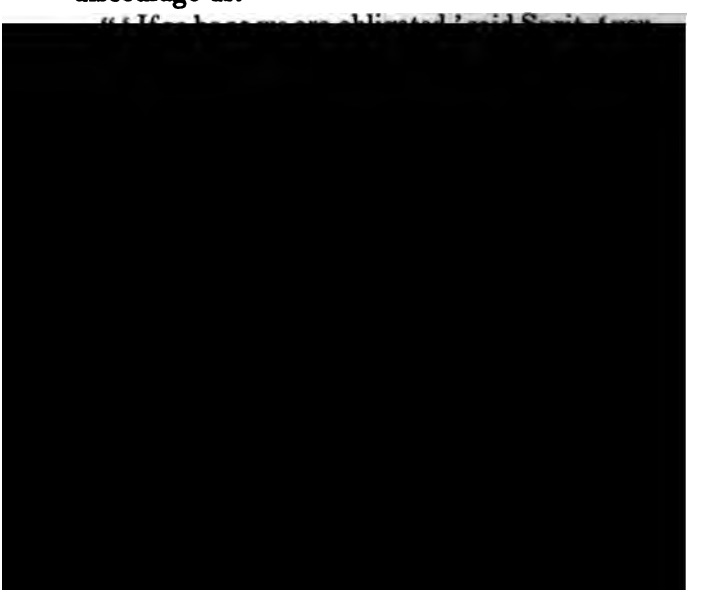
"A man with a wooden leg, and, moreover, with the very conspicuous mark of a patch over one eye, is an awkward companion in a flight; but we couldn't leave old Sprit behind us. He was lowered down first from the prison window: Charley followed him; I was last. We cleared the town, and got into the open country unperceived.

him. This old Sprit was, perhaps, as great a rogue as ever was not hanged, and had done us the worst turn we had ever experienced; and yet, may I be shot if we could have left him in such a stress!

"'Haul in your lee brace, captain,' said I, 'and let's come to an anchor under yon tree, where we can hold a council of war.' We there debated what was to be done, and how we should get any good by the step we had taken. Sprit's advice was to steal the first horses we could find, and make way as fast as possible from this neighbourhood to some point further up the coast. There, he thought, we should be able to get a boat by night, and take the chance of reaching England. I had no great notion of the practicability of this scheme; but I had none better to propose, and after a short rest we pursued our journey. Old Sprit's single eye was as good as many another man's pair, and he soon spied two horses in a field. We made them ours in a style that did credit to the land of our birth, 'canny Yorkshire.' Charley and I mounted one, and old Sprit the other; and, by dint of cudgelling the beasts, we had made before day-break, as we thought, a pretty good voyage. Of course we did not keep the main road, but stuck to the cross ways and the fields. When the sun got up we thought it was not prudent to keep on, and, the beasts being jaded, we turned them loose,

to find the way home as well as they could, while we went into a thick wood to rest, and to hide ourselves until night.

"We had not eaten since supper-time the night before, and the short commons in a French prison is the best whet to a man's appetite that ever was invented. Old Sprit had only one quid, which he offered to part with us; but we had not then acquired a relish for tobacco. We lay grumbling until evening, when our hunger was so great that we resolved to run all risks to get food, and we set off for a small town which we had discovered at about two miles distant. We hadn't a coin of any description; but this did not discourage us.



"The landlady asked where we came from.—Charley replied 'that we were Germans, and, having been bred to the watchmaking trade, we were on our way to Geneva, in search of employment.' This account, which Charley rattled off very glibly, seemed to be believed, and some soup was set upon our table, at which we fell to most vigorously.

"Sprit, who had stood staring all the while the colloquy was going on between the landlady and Charley, asked me what they said; and I explained to him the meaning of the conversation.

"'Come,' says he, 'that's a good-un, howsomever. So the old bum-boat woman takes me for a Jarman! Love my heart, what fools these here mounseers be, good Lord!' and the old fellow chuckled again at what he thought the egregious folly of the landlady.

"We ate the soup, and some cold meat which was brought in after it, in a manner that astonished our hostess. Old Sprit made himself entirely happy with a brandy-bottle; and at every gulp (and they were pretty numerous) abused the wine, which he said was worse than the purser's small beer. Our feast being ended, we began to talk about the expediency of effecting a retreat, and the way in which it should be managed, when an accident happened which put an end to our anxiety on this score.

"Sprit was sitting with his face to the door, and I was opposite to him. On a sudden I saw his extraordinary phiz undergo a remarkable alteration. He stared, and screwed up his mouth, while his hand grasped the knife he had been eating with. Before I could ask him what was the matter, he growled out, in a low tone, 'Shiver my timbers if we an't boarded!'

"I looked round, and saw three soldiers standing in the door-way, with their muskets pointed towards us. At each of the windows was another; and they all cried at once '*A bas les armes!*' meaning, I suppose, old Sprit's knife.

"'Put down the knife, captain,' I said.

"'I suppose I must,' said he: 'we can't cut and run, so we must strike.'

"We learnt afterwards that some person in the room heard and understood Sprit's English, and gave information against us.

"The soldiers, who entered immediately, bound us, and we marched off. I consoled myself with the reflection that this had happened after instead of before dinner; and old Sprit was delighted at coming away without paying the 'old bumboat woman, who took him for a Jarman.' Vanity was not often to be found in the old man's list of weaknesses; but he had a great contempt for all the people in the world excepting Englishmen; and he could not help adding 'as if I didn't look

another guess thing from a d——d foreigner—' the latter appellation being, in his notion, the most contemptuous that the language afforded.

"We were marched to the little sea-port of Biche, which was the nearest place, and confined for several days in the prison of the fort. The commandant, however, was a good-tempered man, who liked to be surrounded by a great many servants; and as he saw we could answer his purpose in this way, while he would have nothing to pay us, and as our escape he thought was nearly impossible, he used to employ us in all sorts of work. Among other duties, as we were known to be sailors, we were made to row his boat, with some of his own people, when he went out upon litlte pleasure excursions, of which he was very fond. Old Sprit's skill in steering and managing the boat gave him a high place in the favour of the commandant, and he soon came to be intrusted with the helm.

"Things might have been worse with us: we were tolerably well fed, and not too much worked; but we were prisoners, and this went sadly against our stomachs.

"The old fellow came to me one day, and, leading me into a quiet corner, where we could not be overheard, asked me 'if I'd like to lend a hand at escaping.' I replied 'that I would willingly, and run all chances.'

"'Why, my master,' said he, 'you *must* run

" 'Why,' said he, 'j
and he agrees, and wc
but we three must no
gether. My scheme is a
out to-day for a sail in
The old governor won'
Varment, his nephew,
a sail, and Captain Je
him. You and two of t
go for to row the boat
blows off shore. Now
three of us, and four, of
d——d hard if we can't
boys, it's true; but then
lows, and I've had the h
isn't the same as if you'c
When I was not so old as
ship's books, and fit like a
" 'Well, captain,' said I
will I fight like a man, if I
" 'Well said, my chicke

Well—we'll go aboard. I shall be at the helm, and the captain and mounseer will be any where they like, and you'll have the other two frog-eaters on the thwarts before you and Charley. I'll steer 'em right away from land; and, if this breeze lasts, we shan't be long making a good course. Then, when they want to come back, we must hoist our colours. Do you take care of the two men; and, if I don't sarve out the masters, my name a'nt Sprit: only, when you see me fall to, do you go to work; and if I get the boat once in my hands, and this here wind blows, we'll be ashore in Old England before four-and-twenty hours are gone, or else I'm d——d out in my reckoning.'

"I can't say this was a very certain or satisfactory prospect to me; but the wish to escape was so strong, that I would have run even greater risks; and the pistols Sprit had stolen were a great comfort to me.

"We went on board just in the manner directed by the old fellow. Monsieur Valmont and Captain Girardin were two of the greatest coxcombs I ever knew. One of their friends met them just as they were about to embark, and was strongly pressed to accompany them, but he refused.

"'*Mais mon brave*,' said he to the captain, 'how can you trust yourself with these English prisoners?'

"The captain put his hand to his sword, and, with a look of ineffable conceit, said 'he felt himself quite safe under the protection of that good friend: besides,' he said, 'don't you observe, *mon cher*, that these English prisoners consist only of an old man with a wooden leg, and two little boys?'

"His persuasions were in vain; and, the friend positively refusing to accompany him, we set sail.

"It was a delightful morning, and we had gone about two leagues from the shore, when Monsieur Valmont wished to put back. The captain opposed this; and a dispute about the distance from land ensued. The captain told me to ask Sprit how far it was, which I did; and he gravely answered 'that we were about half a league distant.' The captain then approached the old fellow, and began to talk the little English he knew, of which Sprit didn't understand a word, but kept answering 'Anan, mounseer,' and 'Ay, ay, sir,' to every observation and question.

"'Keep your eye upon the weather-gage, and look out for squalls,' he said to me, in an under tone, by which I knew he was about to prepare for action.

"The dispute between Monsieur Valmont and the captain was continued with all the vehemence and gesticulation which Frenchmen use in talking about trifles. The captain swore that the shore was so near that he could swim to it.

"'What does he say?' asked Sprit, as the captain was standing close by him, looking through a glass.

"'He says he could swim ashore,' I replied.

"'Does he?' said the old fellow; and with the rapidity of lightning he seized the captain in his arms, as a nurse would a child, and tossed him overboard, exclaiming, at the same moment, 'Why then, d——n his eyes, let him go and try! Jack's alive!' he shouted, as he threw down monsieur, and put his wooden leg upon him, by way of checking his motions—the sight of his pistols, in the mean time, operating upon the Frenchman's nerves.

"Charley and I had not been idle. The two French sailors were on the thwart before us, and it took little trouble to pull them on their backs. The sight of our pistols, and the defenceless posture to which we had reduced them, prevented the fellows from offering any resistance, and they only cried for mercy.

"Sprit tied Monsieur Valmont hand and foot, and afterwards relieved us of our charge by performing the same office for the sailors. He then seized the helm again, and, putting the boat before the wind, which luckily continued favorable, he made good his promise, by carrying us in safety to Port St. Pierre, in Guernsey. We brought Monsieur Valmont and the two sailors to England, where they were detained for a short time,

till a change of prisoners was effected. What became of the captain I really can't tell:—perhaps he did swim ashore—perhaps he was picked up—perhaps—— But that's all the fortune of war.

"I went home and found that I was supposed to be dead, and that the mourning my friends had worn for me had long expired. My liking for the sea still remaining very strong, my relations thought it wasn't worth while to oppose my inclinations; and to my great joy Charley Russell and I were both appointed midshipmen on board the Catamaran sloop of war. We sailed together for seven years. He was a kind-hearted lad—brave as a lion when fighting was the word, but a little of a spoony, as we sailors thought, at all other times. He didn't like grog nor tobacco, and was as lazy as a negro except when he was obliged to work. He was too fond of book-learning to make a thorough seaman: old Scourge had spoilt him.

"He was loved by every body on board, notwithstanding he had a little dash of the milk-and-water in his composition. In any body but Charley this would have been unbearable; but somehow or other, he made every soul in the ship, from the captain down to the mess-boy, his stanch friend, and any of them would have gone to the devil for him: and yet, with all his mildness, Charley was as fond of a joke as any

man. He used to delight in humbugging the chaplain, and thought he played him a trick by putting a double dose of rum into his grog; but, Lord love you! the parson enjoyed that joke; and, if it would have given Charley any satisfaction, he might have made his reverence's grog all rum, without ever giving him offence.

"Well, you see Charley was given to writing and reading; and, when he lost his number"——

"Lost what, uncle?" said Elizabeth.

"Lost his number, my love," replied the captain with great gravity.

"But do, pray, tell us what losing his number means."

"Why it means that he died, to be sure. I thought every body knew what a man's losing his number meant."

"But to die, you know, uncle, is to lose one's life, not one's number," said Elizabeth, who knew very well what the old gentleman meant, but who was delighted at any opportunity of getting him into a definition, at which, it must be confessed, he was never very brilliant.

"Yes, my love, so it is;—but it's a great pity you don't understand these things; though, I declare, I don't know how you should. Well, ask and learn; that's the way to know, to be sure. Why you see, Elizabeth, each of the men belonging to a mess have a number, and their portions

are served out to them according to those numbers; so, if a man should lose his number, why he'd lose his mess, and that's a thing he never could do while he had breath: therefore, you see, losing his number is, as you say, just the same thing as losing his life. In short, my love, it means the same as sticking his spoon in the wall."

"Well, and why does he stick his spoon in the wall?"

"Why because he can't help it," said the captain, with a loud laugh at his niece's ignorance, and perfectly unconscious that every body present was enjoying the manner in which the arch girl was drawing him out.

"But pray do explain to us, uncle, about sticking a spoon in the wall."

"You must be rather thick-headed, I do think, love," said the captain, "not to understand that. You see, when a man's mess is served out to him, he whips his spoon out of his pocket, and falls to without delay. After this explanation, I suppose I need not tell you, that while a man has any thing to do in this world, he would never think of parting with his spoon. Now d'ye understand it?"

"Oh, yes; and thank you for the trouble you have taken, uncle."

"I think," said Harry, "it is as ingenious a pe-

riphrasis for a man's giving up the ghost as ever I heard."

"I wish you'd talk English, Harry," said the captain; "because, when you give us that outlandish stuff, how can I tell whether you are not saying something disrespectful about our sea phrases? and that is a thing which, you know, I would not allow."

"Indeed, sir," said Harry, "I admire them so much, and am, besides, so grateful to you for the kind manner in which you have taken my turn, that I should be very sorry to offend either. What I said was very respectful."

"Likely," said the captain, who was soon pacified. "But this story that I'm going to give you was written by poor Charley Russell, and found among his papers after he died. Charley had no relations at all that ever I heard of; so, as I was his messmate, I took charge of all he had, and this among the rest. Poor fellow! he was shot right through the head on the glorious 1st of June, and fell into my arms. He died without a moment's pain, as well as I can guess. But, come, I'm chattering instead of giving you the story. Now silence—I am going to begin: but, first of all, I should tell you that I believe Charley picked this story up, or the main part, from an old French priest, who in his youth had been a kind of missionary among the Chinese;

and, although Charley used to believe every word the old fellow told him, I must own that I didn't; and I think some part of this story mayn't be quite so true as it should be; but, such as it is, here you have it."

The captain then produced his manuscript, and began to read.

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS.

My Uncle's Story.

Upon the 15th of the first moon (Yun Seaou) the flower-painted lanterns shine through the whole night.

LALLA ROOKH.

[redacted]

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS.

ABOUT three thousand eight hundred years before the vulgar era of the creation of the world the celestial empire of China was governed by Xo Fi. He was, though a young man, of great wisdom; his face and figure were of the rarest beauty; and so prodigious was his strength, that he could break iron with the mere force of his arm—or his courtiers lied. He was a kind and generous ruler over his people, and was universally beloved. He had one failing, and but one—though that was of such a nature that it not unfrequently led him into the commission of imprudences which his virtue and his good sense would equally have forbidden—he was too apt to yield to the impulses of his passion, and to suffer his reason to slumber. His palace displayed such a collection of splendour and delight as surpasses the cold imaginations of peo-

ple born in this degenerate age. The floors were of beaten silver, over which were spread carpets of the richest fabric; the walls were built of aromatic woods, and the most costly silks and muslins hung against them in profuse drapery. Perfumes, so exquisite that they elevated the senses beyond the earth and its impurities, formed the atmosphere of this delightful abode. His haram was filled with the most enchanting beauties: from every part of the globe the fairest women had been collected, and here their concentrated charms crowned all the other fascinations of this earthly paradise. From morning to night the songs of these charmers whiled away the lingering hours, and even midnight was made

The king coincided in the judgment of the ladies; and the bonze was dismissed from the court, with a civil intimation that his presence was no longer welcome. The old gentleman had, moreover, become unpopular from his having discountenanced a cruel, and, as it turned out, a disastrous war with a neighbouring nation; the only pretence for which was the manner in which each of the belligerent parties wore their hair, and which the other thought was damnable and heretical. The bonze had been so indiscreet as to say "that it was better for the people to consent to cut off their hair than to provoke the chance of their foes cutting off their heads;" and for this saying he had fallen, as it must be confessed he deserved to do, into very just and general odium. The old man retired to his sanctuary a little surprised, but with as grave a visage as his philosophy would permit him to assume. The prince continued to lead the same life of enjoyment; and, in the recesses of his seraglio, soon forgot the bonze, his advice, and the obligations he was under to him.

One morning he strolled into the magnificent gardens which surrounded his palace, and where art had been so luxuriantly employed that the seasons were subdued to its will. The fruits of autumn loaded the branches in the summer, and the richest flowers of the spring blossomed throughout the year. Upon one of the loveliest

of this garden's banks reclined a female form; and the king, supposing it to be one of the ladies of his haram, approached, designing to surprise her with the bliss of his presence; when, to his astonishment, he found that it was a person unknown to him.

She slept:—he leaned over her with breathless delight; for she surpassed all that he had yet beheld of female beauty. Her light locks sported in the soft morning breeze; her cheek lay, as she slept, upon a blushing flower, which, though of the rarest beauty, was yet inferior to her breathing charms. Her mouth, half opened, displayed teeth which put to shame all his oriental treasures for brilliancy, and exceeded the most delicate ivory in whiteness: a soft smile played upon her features, and spoke the serenity of her soul.

The prince hung over her delighted and enamoured: he stooped down, and, with the air of a man whose very caresses were somewhat of a condescension, he was about to imprint a kiss upon the rosy half-open lips, when an ugly withered hand was interposed, and he had barely time to prevent the intended kiss being bestowed upon it. He started, and beheld a dwarfish old woman, with a face of the most hideous description, to which a mixed expression of malice and cunning gave a disgusting appearance, and rendered the ugliness of her features

still more revolting. The very few teeth which time had spared to her stuck out, and showed like discoloured fangs upon her withered lower lip; her hand, which had so nearly received an honour never intended for it, was more like the paw of a beast than any thing human, and long nails, like the talons of a bird, adorned it. Her figure was diminitive; her back curved, and rising above her shoulders. She was dressed in an odd garb of black cloth, upon which many fantastic symbols were depicted. The anger which the prince felt disposed to give way to was checked by a sense of awe as he regarded this strange unearthly figure,

"Mighty father of the earth!" cried she, with a most reverend and humble inclination of her deformed body, "this sleeping maiden is my slave: no mortal has yet tasted the honey of her virgin lip; nor shall any one in this realm, where property is held sacred under the laws of a just monarch."

"What price will purchase her?" cried the infatuated youth.

"Fifty thousand purses of gold," replied the crone.

"Then she is mine!" exclaimed the king, in transport, as he caught her in his arms, and was about to complete his first purpose, when the grasp of the withered hand again prevented him.

"The purses!" said the old woman.

"They shall be paid to you."

"I trust not a debtor's memory; you may forget."

"I have said it," cried the king, in anger.

"But do it," rejoined the importunate old woman.

"Beldame, begone!" said the sovereign, taking off a ring: "give this to my treasurer, who will pay you."

"The purses!" repeated the old lady, rejecting his ring.

The king, carried away by his passion, made a blow at her, which would probably have demolished her; but, to his surprise, he struck only the empty air; whilst the hag, standing at his opposite ear, roared again "The purses!" He struck again, but still as vainly as before; and when, exhausted with rage and his exertions, he threw himself into a seat, the elastic beldame repeated in a whisper "The purses!"

"Come with me, then," said the king, rising, and hurrying into the palace, while the hag hobbled after him.

The monarch summoned his treasurer, who, accompanied by twenty porters and fifty thousand purses, appeared with that rapidity which his well-known impetuosity had rendered habitual. He ordered the gold to be delivered to the old woman, who, receiving it in her lap, was about to speak, when, his patience being utterly exhausted

by the coolness of her demeanour, he very ungallantly ordered her to be kicked forth.

The treasurer, his porters, and forty black eunuchs, proceeded with the velocity of lightning to execute his commands: sixty-one feet were raised in attitude to kick; and in that attitude did they remain, frigid and fixed. The king found himself under the influence of some resistless power, and attempted, but in vain, to do that which he had ordered his attendants to perform. His limbs refused their office, and he foamed with rage; while the beldame, with a provoking indifference, went on to count her purses.

When she had done she took the treasurer's staff of office out of his hand, and, having made a solemn obeisance to the king, and kissed her hand to the treasurer, she seated herself on it very gracefully, saddlewise, and soared out of an open window into the air. As she disappeared the kickers recovered the use of their legs, and gave instant proof of it by running with all expedition, and wild with terror, out of the hall.

The king was too much occupied with the thought of his charming purchase to dwell upon this mark of disrespect, but rushed back to the bank where he had left her lying. She was still in the same posture; and, the witch being no longer at hand, he imprinted an ardent kiss upon the lovely lips which had so much fascinated him.

He started back, for he found they were as

cold as marble, and that the beautiful form was inanimate as a corpse. Indeed, but for the gracefulness and ease of her posture, he would have thought she was really dead: no respiration heaved her bosom, whiter than that of a swan. He laid a rose-leaf upon her lips, but it moved not; he clasped her in his arms, and embraced only a cold substance. The prince saw that he was the dupe of some magical delusion, and he heaped loud and bitter curses upon the authors of it.

When he had recovered from the first paroxysm of his rage he ordered his attendants to carry the fair inanimate to the haram. Here she was laid upon a couch, and the distracted prince

dent proceeding he saved himself from the shame of exposing his ignorance.

At length the emperor was told of a devotee of singular piety and mortification of life, who travelled from town to town in a sort of open sedan chair, the seat of which was filled with sharp nails, on which he constantly sate for the good of the souls of the faithful; and, in return for this sacrifice, he implored the charity of the righteous. To him every thing was said to be known; and his piety, it was believed, had drawn down inspiration. He was consulted; and, after hearing the conflicting opinions of the wise men, and shaking his head at each, he read with great fluency the inscription, which he rendered into an exhortation to the emperor to sit upon a board covered with sharp nails. Nothing but the reputation of the sanctity of a particular part of this gentleman's person prevented the emperor from treating him as he would have treated the old woman who rode away with the treasurer's staff of office; but some ill fate seemed always to frustrate his majesty's kicking propensities, and the devotee was suffered to depart unhurt.

The king dismissed his councillors, and at length thought of his early tutor, the bonze, whose knowledge, he believed, was greater than that of all his kingdom. He immediately sent for him, and implored him, by the affection he had formerly manifested, to extricate him from

the misery into which his passion had plunged him.

After examining the characters, the bonze said, with an undisturbed air, "Potent and beloved monarch, the inscription contains the same caution which I formerly ventured to give your majesty, and for which I was so unhappy as to incur your displeasure;—to repeat it would be to increase the weight of your anger."

"But is there no way," cried the monarch, "of awaking the maiden?"

"Yes," replied the bonze, "but it is fraught with peril to your gracious person."

"Tell it me, nevertheless," answered the prince.

[redacted]

The sleeper will awake when the knot which confines her hair shall be unbound:—but pause; for, the first time thine eyes, Xo Fi, shall behold the light of day, after the enchantment shall be dissolved, thou wilt be deprived of thy throne."

The king's hand was stretched out to unloose the fatal knot, when the bonze arrested it, and the chief mandarin urged the necessity of deliberation; but the king vowed he would lose life and power rather than forego the possession of that beauty which alone could make them endurable.

The chief mandarin, who was versed in all the subtilties of the law, and who had a great talent at making any plain and obvious words bear a meaning very different from that which they were intended to convey, thought some method might be adopted of evading the prediction, or of averting it until the means of appeasing the powers by whom it was wrought should have been hit upon. It was by acting constantly upon this principle that he had attained the first rank in his profession; and he had made his fame and his fortune solely by his skill in delay.

"For example," said he, "if the emperor should have his palace and gardens lighted with lamps, and exclude the beams of the sun"——

The king threw himself upon the necks of the mandarin and the bonze, calling them his fathers

and preservers. The chief mandarin had a facility in shedding tears—so he wept for joy; but the bonze only shook his head, for he was a philosopher.

Orders were immediately issued for the preparation of a palace which should exclude the light of heaven, and in which the soft blaze of aromatic lamps should shed a more beautiful illumination than that of the sun. In the empire of China, at this time, the will of the monarch was promptly followed by its execution. This was the golden age for kings; but it has passed away, and does not now seem likely to return in China, or in any other places.

A costly pavilion was stretched over a beau-

faded like a dream. Her eyes turned green; her nose, which was before of the most delicate beauty, sank flattened to her cheeks, which were as suddenly puffed out; her ivory teeth became black and uneven; while the once rich jetty locks, in the curls of which his fingers still played, were as red as a fox's tail! Xo Fi turned away enraged and disgusted, when a loud laugh was heard through the slender walls of the pavilion, and he recognised the infernal chuckle of the old hag who had thus duped him. Without casting another look upon the altered maiden, who could no longer be called *dear* to him but in the light of a purchase, he rushed out, resolved to tear the witch limb-meal. By dint of his prodigious strength he dashed down the frail partition, and soon found himself in the garden.

He looked round for the old woman, but in vain: he thought he beheld her ugly form gliding behind a thicket, and he darted towards it: in his anger he tore down the clustering blossoms, but his search was useless; she was not there, though her discordant voice still rang in his ear.

While he was employed in demolishing the arbour of roses in this fruitless search the chief gardener came up, and saluted him with a smart blow from a spade which he carried, crying out, at the same moment, "Cursed slave! what has

induced thee thus to destroy my roses, and the emperor's favorite tree?"

The king turned upon him, and, seizing the poor gardener by the neck and one leg, was about to hurl him away with as much ease as a man would lift a dog, when, his eye happening to fall upon the sleeve of his dress, he found himself in the garb of the lowest order of his people. He stopped, as if struck by lightning, and, letting the trembling wretch fall, he remained in stupid amazement. He looked around, but beheld nothing save the gardens, and the palace in the distance;—no traces of the pavilion were to be seen. He examined his person, which seemed strangely altered for the worse: his hands were hard and discoloured; his legs, once the envy of all his courtiers, and the admiration of all his ladies, were wickedly bandy. He put his hand to his beard, and found, instead of that grateful cluster of descending curls which formerly decorated it, only a few harsh bristles.

It is impossible to say how long he might have remained in the state of stupor, into which these afflicting discoveries had plunged him, but for the return of the gardener. This cunning rogue, as soon as he was extricated from the grasp of the metamorphosed monarch, picked himself slily up, and withdrew gently until out of his reach, when he set off in a full run to fetch the guard. He told them, as well as his fright and the state

of his lungs would permit, how he had caught a vagabond tearing down the king's roses, who had answered his remonstrance by threatening to murder him. The guard arrived, and, without ceremony seizing the mighty monarch, by dint of hauling and kicking his sacred, but changed person, soon dragged him to the gate, out of which they pushed him. He raved, swore he was their sovereign, and threatened them with death by unheard-of lingering tortures, for which they first repaid him with blows, but at which they afterwards laughed. The king's rage continued, and it was increased by perceiving that, in spite of all his exertions, he continued to utter his menaces and reproaches in the most vulgar dialect of China.

At length, when he had nearly exhausted himself, and the joke began to seem somewhat too long for the guards, a porter came up, who cried out, "Well met, Fong! thy wife has been seeking thee; and, as thou didst not come home to thy morning's meal, she has prepared a breakfast of bamboo for thee."

The king stared, but said nothing; he could not believe that the threat of a wife and a bamboo had any relation to him.

"Who is this fellow?" cried one of the guards to the porter.

"Don't you know poor Fong?" was the reply:

" he is a silly fellow, who has got a shrew for a wife, as his sore bones and empty belly often testify; eh, Fong?"

Poor King Fong made no reply, but, with a mind distracted between grief and amazement, he turned away, amidst the shouts of the soldiery. As he wandered slowly away he observed a little bustling woman before him, who was nearly as broad as she was long, clad in the coarsest garments; and her sleeve, being tucked up to the shoulder, exposed her muscular arm, which was, in point of dimension, much more like a man's thigh than any thing else. At the end of it her ox-fist clutched a piece of bamboo, the sight of which filled the late king with an anxiety almost amounting to terror, for which he could not ac-

against his leg, and, giving him at the same time an adroit twist, laid him upon his back: she then knelt upon the pit of his stomach, and, having, as it must be allowed, somewhat the best of the fight, she continued the beating, which his intractability had interrupted, occasionally ceasing her blows, and applying her rhetoric.

The lady was gifted with uncommon volubility, and rated him soundly for deserting his family and idling away his time. When she had talked to a certain pitch she cried; then fell to beating him; and then rated him again; ending every reproach, and enforcing every blow, with "And then to fly into a passion! that's the worst, and what, you know, I hate. How often have I told you, Fong, that I hate people who are passionate? How many scrapes has it already led you into! It may be the cause of your death some day, and then what is to become of me and your poor children?" And here she wept again; but in a few minutes, resuming the bamboo exercise, she added, "But I'll cure you of your passionate tricks, or I'll know the reason on't."

At length, tired with her eloquence and exertion, she raised herself from poor Fong's chest, upon which she had been sitting like a nightmare, and assisted him to rise. He was so much exhausted with the discipline he had undergone, and the change to which he found himself subjected, that he was incapable of resistance, and

was led by his little new wife to a small hovel in the neighbourhood, where he found five ragged children, who honored him with the tender appellation of father. His wife, who seemed to relax somewhat of her severity, set before him food of the coarsest kind, which she invited him to eat, hinting at the same time, according to the custom of some wives, that it was much more than he deserved. He fell to, for the events of the morning had not deprived him of appetite; and, having finished, his wife pointed to a load which stood before the door, and bade him carry it to the house of a certain merchant, at the other end of the city. He demurred; indeed he swore he would not carry it, his courage return-

fond of her too. "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows;" and as poor Fong was no longer powerful, and in point of beauty was even inferior to his little wife, he embraced her and his fate with as good a grace as he could, and, in the course of two years, found that his family, instead of five, consisted of seven children. He continued his labours, and discovered that hard work and hard fare had altered the fiery nature of his constitution so much, that even his wife's remonstrances had become less frequent, and his acquaintance with the bamboo was now merely a distant one.

It has been said truly enough by a Chinese philosopher, and the saying has been adopted by the sages of other polite nations, "that there is no state so humble as not to have its grievances, anxieties, and difficulties, equal in number and in weight to those which burden the highest condition of society." It is the lot of humanity; and the porter Fong was not exempt from it any more than the potent Xo Fi had been. Fong was delighted, as a father must be, at the increase of his family; but he was as miserable too as a father must be when he made the discovery that his utmost exertions could not provide them with bread.

Children are naturally noisy; and, when there is nothing to stop their mouths with, the noise becomes reasonable enough on their parts, but

infinitely vexatious to those who are obliged to hear them; and Fong was exactly in this latter predicament.

Their necessities gave rise to many consultations between Fong and his wife. The little woman was not of an unkind temper; and, although she had an excellent knack of handling the bamboo, she was not so unreasonable as to exercise it because poor Fong's unremitting labour failed to produce enough to supply his family with food. She rather set about discovering some means of remedying the evil which beset them. She considered and rejected a thousand different projects which suggested themselves to her; but, at length, she hit upon one to which *she* saw no objection; and, although she anticipated some on the part of her husband, she did not doubt that she should be able to remove his scruples.

Notwithstanding the vigilance of the chief mandarin, a system of corruption prevailed in the execution of justice, by which wealthy malefactors were enabled to evade the punishment which the laws had provided for their offences. When such persons as these were condemned to the bastinado, they were in the habit of procuring some needy wretches, who would rather endure any pain than that of poverty, to undergo, instead of them, the stripes they had been ordered to receive.

By an understanding with the officers of justice this was not difficult to be managed; but, as men do not like to be bastinadoed if they can avoid it, the substitutes were scarce, and these vicarious criminals commanded a high price in the market. Fong's wife thought of this, and saw at once the means of providing for her starving children.

It happened that, at this time, Yam Quam, a notorious peculator, who was at least as rich as he was wicked, had been condemned by the supreme court of judicature to several days of successive scourging, for the good of his soul, and for the sake of example to all the rest of the people within the dominions.

The government of China was a humane and paternal one; and, having a great aversion to shedding the blood even of criminals who deserved death, they preferred sentencing them to a punishment which, if they happened to survive, (and that they should do so was pretty nearly impossible,) made them better during the remainder of their lives.

Yam Quam had been sentenced to four successive doses of the bastinado, in the humane belief that he could not survive the second; for, when the bastinado is administered in good earnest, it is likely enough to prove mortal. Three of these four days of discipline had already passed; and as, of his three substitutes, two had

died, and the third had every prospect of remaining a cripple during the rest of his life, Yam Quam found it not a little difficult to provide a fourth, and his offers were immense. Fong's wife learnt this; and, having bargained with the criminal himself to furnish a substitute for twenty purses, she came home to tell her husband of it.

Fong was horror-stricken at the mention of her proposal, and in plain Chinese told her that nothing should induce him to ratify the bargain she had made.

Mrs. Fong burst into a flood of tears—the approved custom for married ladies who wish to carry a difficult point; and, with a multitude of tender reproaches, besought him not to hesitate at any sacrifice to prevent his dear children from dying of starvation.

Fong was as good a father—and so he told his wife—as any in China. There was nothing, in reason, he would not do for his children's sake; but he could not make up his mind to provoke his death—and a death which was as horrible as it was certain—by the means his wife proposed.

Mrs. Fong redoubled her persuasions, and Fong's refusal acquired, if possible, a more determined tone. At length Mrs. F. who was not a woman to be trifled with when she had set her mind on any thing, told Fong he *must*. "If it's the beating alone you dread, Fong," said she

rising, and drawing from its recess her own bamboo, which, from long disuse, was covered with cobwebs, "you will not avoid that by your refusal, for I flatter myself that I can strike as hard a blow as any executioner in our celestial empire; and I swear by Cham Ti, (a solemn oath!) that you shall know no respite from my bamboo until my children have bread. So now, Fong, you may choose whether you will be beaten by me and get nothing for it, or be beaten by the officers and have twenty purses."

This was a new way of putting the case—a style of reasoning against which Fong had nothing to say. He knew Mrs. F. was not a woman to be trifled with, and he knew too that she was every way capable of keeping her word. He saw that it was his fate to die of a beating; and he thought, therefore, he might as well ensure his children bread as be killed gratis. After a little further discussion, for the purpose of keeping up his marital dignity, and to save himself from the appearance of being influenced by his wife's bamboo, he acquiesced, and set about preparing for his martyrdom.

Just at this moment, however, an old bonze, who directed the spiritual affairs of the Fong family, came into their cottage. He had heard some part of the altercation between Fong and his wife by listening at the key-hole—a common practice with his reverence; and, wishing to

be further satisfied, he entered the hovel. In answer to his inquiries, Mrs. F. who had nothing to conceal from so pious a man and so good a friend, told him the dreadful straits to which they were reduced, and the expedient they had just hit upon for extricating themselves.

The bonze looked wise; and, after rubbing his hand several times round his head—a practice which in China implies profound thought—he told them he could suggest an expedient, which, without any of the inconveniences which Fong so much dreaded, presented equal pecuniary advantages. The couple listened with the utmost attention to the good man while he explained to them that on the next day a solemn festival was to be celebrated, at a sacred spot, about a league distant from the city, by the bonzes of the college to which he belonged, in honour of the god Tien Tchu; and that he wanted a person who would stand on the top of a machine, which was erected for this purpose, and remain there in sight of the people during the whole day. For this service, trifling as it seemed to be, he was ready, he said, to give Fong as much money as was offered by Yam Quam to undergo his bastinado.

Fong was overjoyed at this offer, and embraced it without hesitation. The little woman was ready to go out of her wits for joy when the bonze gave her one purse as earnest of his inten-

tions, and she flew to procure bread with it for her famishing children. Fong promised to be with the bonze by day-break, and they parted mutually satisfied with each other.

On the following morning, Fong, after a good breakfast, which the bonze's purse enabled him to procure, took an affectionate leave of his wife and children, and set off to keep his promise, like a punctual man as he was. The bonze received him, and conducted him to the top of the machine, where there were several robust bonzes, to whom Fong was introduced. A robe was produced, which he was desired to put on, and with the assistance of the bonzes he did so. They were most assiduous in their attentions to him in tying and buttoning the clothes he was to wear; and he was exhausting his eloquence in thanks, when he found that on their suddenly drawing one string of the robe, with which all the others were connected, his limbs were effectually confined. A lofty cap, decorated with jewels, was put upon his head, and tied under his chin; immediately after which latter operation he found he was entirely gagged, and could not open his mouth. He could, therefore, neither move hand nor foot, nor tongue. Being thus effectually rendered helpless, he was immediately taken up in the arms of the bonzes, and carried to a part of the machine whence he could see the immense crowd of people assembled below, but his face

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ful contortions, which the people who saw him took for so many proofs of his zeal, and of the earnestness of his devotion.

While this farce was playing the chief mandarin came past. He was a great observer of religious forms; but, as he did not happen to be a disciple of Tien Tchu, and as he had a spite against the priests of this deity, he stopped his retinue to see what was going on.

He listened to the bonze's sermon, and looked at the object of it, in whose rolling eyes and frantic look he thought he discovered something very extraordinary. He asked the bonze what was the name of this devoted nobleman; and the bonze replied that it was against the principles of his religion to disclose his name.

"Well, then," said the mandarin, "let him come down; I will ask him myself."

"Call him down," said the bonze, "and see if he will come."

The mandarin did call him; but Fong did not obey his summons, for the best reason in the world—he was tied hand and foot. He did all he could—he grinned most dreadfully.

Luckily for the poor fellow, that which was said to be the chief mandarin's greatest weakness saved his life. His lordship began to doubt; and, his doubts turning upon the point whether all the bonzes were not great rogues, he sent up some of his own officers to examine into the affair.

They soon discovered the manner in which Fong was bound, and the reason of his silence; and, releasing him, they brought him before the mandarin.

Fong's answers soon disclosed the whole mystery; and the mandarin, who, when he did decide a cause, did it in such a manner as to make an impression, decreed, in the first place, that the twenty purses should be paid to Fong; and, this being done, he directed that all the bonzes concerned in this trick should be immediately thrown from the top of the machine into the river, and recommended to the protection of the spirits of the flood, who, if they were not impostors, would, of course, preserve their lives. This sentence was immediately carried into execution, to the satisfaction of the populace, who, as they expected to see only one man leap into the river, were agreeably disappointed at finding ten jumpers. They praised the equity and sagacity of the chief mandarin to the skies, and went home delighted that their laws and liberties were under the protection of so wise and virtuous a magistrate.

Fong, rejoicing at his escape, and at the acquisition of the purses, slipped away from the crowd of persons who congratulated him, and set off by a near cut towards the city, intending to surprise his wife with the news. He found, however, that the exertions of the day, and his

fright, had so much fatigued him, that some repose was necessary; and he was devoured too by a burning thirst.

On his road he passed a small pleasure-garden, and, looking through a latticed door, he saw a fountain throwing up its sparkling waters beneath the cool shade of a luxuriant tree. As nobody appeared at hand, he entered without ceremony, and, having quenched his thirst in the refreshing stream, he lay down in a thicket, when he soon fell into a deep slumber.

He was awoke after some time by a slight noise, which, upon raising his head, he found was occasioned by the passage near him of a person who was borne in a sedan by two slaves. They put him down near the place of Fong's retreat, which was so completely a concealment, that the position in which he lay prevented him from being seen. He, however, recognised, in the person borne, the devotee who sat upon nails, and who, when he had been a king, pretended to decipher the characters which had been the cause of all his misfortunes.

The slaves having retired, the devotee very coolly got up from his nailed seat, and proceeded to undress for the purpose of bathing; but in doing this he discovered the whole secret of his sanctity, for Fong perceived that the thin linen drawers in which he was clad were lined with a piece of buffalo's hide, which so firmly resisted

the effect of the nails, that he sat as much unhurt as if he had been upon a bed of roses. The rogue, after bathing, dressed himself in a splendid robe, which he produced from his chair; and having taken from the same place a considerable sum of money, raised from the offerings of the pious in the course of the day, he spread it upon the ground, and sat down to count it.

A troop of young girls were now seen, hastening down a walk of the garden in a dance, the measure of which they marked by a song.—They saluted the pious anchorite with all the blandishments of mercenary affection; and Fong soon discovered that they composed the haram of this hypocrite, who retired hither to solace himself after the fatigues of his feigned mortification. He pursued the dance of his female companions with as much alacrity as they, and was soon lost sight of in the flowery thickets of the garden; while Fong, who feared that some unlucky bastinado might be in store for him if he were discovered, crawled from his hiding-place, and, gaining the gate, pursued his road towards the city.

As he wandered along, reflecting upon the hypocrisy of the rogue he had left behind, he could not avoid contrasting his own present with his former condition.

"And if I had been still a monarch," he said,

and smiled, "I should, upon the discovery of this imposture, have indulged in a fit of passion, and ordered his head off; but I thank the gods that, in all my misfortunes, I have at least subdued that weakness—I am no longer a passionate man."

As he uttered this soliloquy he looked up, and beheld the old woman who had sold him the sleeping fair.

"Another old acquaintance!" said he.

The witch, courtesying before him, presented him with the identical treasurer's staff of office upon which she had flown away from him, and said "Will it please you to ride?"

"Oh, yes," replied Fong, smiling; and, taking the staff from her hand, he strode across it. No sooner had he spoken than he felt himself ascending; and, after sailing in the air for a short space, the staff made a descent towards the palace, where it entered an open window of the state chamber, and deposited Fong upon the regal couch. To his utter amazement, he found too that his person had during this flight undergone another change, and that he was now restored to his pristine condition of royalty. His attendants entering, he learned that he had lain in a trance for three days; and, shortly after, the bonze, prostrating himself before the throne, implored his pardon for the delusion he had practised upon him by means of a dream.

"Then we have no wife?" cried the monarch.

"None," replied the bonze.

"And are we a king again?"

"As you have ever been," continued the philosopher; "but, fearing that your impetuosity would cause some formidable evil, I have taken this means of discharging the duty I vowed to your deceased father, and of teaching your majesty a lesson which I hope you will never forget."

"By the bamboo of my late little wife, I never will!" replied the monarch.

He then gave orders that a solemn festival should be proclaimed, at which every house and every garden should be illuminated with coloured lamps and lanterns, in commemoration of these strange events, and in some degree emblematical of his own illuminated pavilion in the gardens of the palace.

The bonze presented the king with a real slave, of beauty equal to hers of whom he had dreamed, and no foul witch interfered to mar his happiness. He sought out the dervis, and, having ascertained that part of the dream which related to this impostor to be correct, he only punished him by confiscating his haram and pleasure-gardens, and taking away his buffalo-skin, which latter *pointed* mark of his displeasure he thought sufficient.

Although he knew that his obligations to the chief mandarin were merely visionary, yet he

had been so thoroughly frightened with the prospect of his jump into the torrent, from which, in his dream, this minister had saved him, that he always treated him with profound respect, and loaded him with honours, to which, notwithstanding his habit of doubting, the virtue and wisdom of the Mandarin fully entitled him.

The remainder of the reign of Ko Fi was prosperous, and extended to an uncommon length, equally honorable to himself and beneficial to his people.

Annually, on the return of the day on which he awoke from his trance, he had the festival which he had ordered on that occasion repeated. The memory of it did not die with him, but it has been perpetuated during the last nine thousand six hundred and one years, and will probably be continued as long as the world exists. Such was the origin of *The Feast of Lanterns*.

"WELL, uncle," said Elizabeth, "it is a very pretty story, but I wonder at hearing you say you do not believe it to be true."

"Oh, my love," replied the veteran, "it may be true or it may not; all I can say for it is that it happened a long while ago, and a great way off; and, if any body likes to believe it, I don't know any harm it can do."

Supper was now announced, and the story-telling for this evening was concluded.

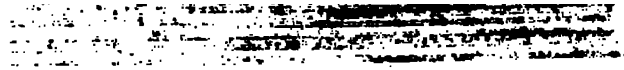
END OF VOLUME I.

J. HOLLINS AND CO. ALBION PRESS, LONDON.

MY GRANDMOTHER'S GUESTS

AND

THEIR TALES.



MY GRANDMOTHER'S GUESTS

AND

THEIR TALES.

BY HENRY SLINGSBY.

" I should be, sir, the merriest here,
But that I have ne'er a story of my own
Worth telling at this time."

The Maid's Tragedy.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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1825.

MY GRANDMOTHER'S GUESTS,

AND THEIR TALES.

THE party being assembled on the following evening, my grandmother proposed that the tales should begin without delay.

"I make this suggestion," said the old lady, "in order that our gossiping may not interfere with the pleasure we hope to derive from the stories we are to listen to; and I do it at this moment in particular, because Harry, whose turn it is to begin next, is very fond of cheating us of a quarter of an hour if he can."

"At least I do not deserve that reproach on the present occasion," said Harry, "for I have taken the trouble to transcribe my tale, so that it is a matter of indifference to me when I begin. You, my dear madam," said he to the old lady, "objected to one story because there was not a

real ghost in it: I have endeavored, as far as I could, to accommodate your taste, by introducing a demon in my story, and that is worth half a dozen ghosts. Elizabeth too, I think, complained that there was no love in the same story: I have contrived a pair of *inamorati* in this, who, I hope, will please her."

"Let me advise you, then," said Elizabeth, "for your own sake, to begin. If you go on in this way, you may raise expectations which it will, perhaps, be difficult for you to satisfy."

"Thanks for your caution," said Harry; and, opening his manuscript, he began to read.

THE MAGIC MIRROR.

The Student's second Tale.

——————— I tell thee
There's not a pulse beats in the human frame
That is not governed by the stars above us :
The blood that fills our veins, in all its ebb
And flow, is swayed by them as certainly
As are the restless tides of the salt sea
By the resplendent moon.

FROM A MS. DRAMA, BY H. NEELE, ESQ.

THE MAGIC MIRROR.

A COLLEGE is the place of all others where profligacy most plentifully abounds; and, perhaps, of all the colleges in the world, that of Göttingen is the most famous in this respect. We can, upon occasion, furnish some very tolerable specimens of dissolute, idle, roaring youngsters from Oxford and Cambridge; but the most notorious of our Mohawks must blush at his insignificance when compared with a real thorough-bred German Bursche. In the single article of drinking he would put to shame even the master and fellows of Trinity; and, for vulgarity, blasphemy, and profaneness, all St. John's could not match him.

It is, perhaps, natural that young men, who find themselves thrown together in a society where every restraint is taken off, (and such is a college life,) should indulge in all the riot of

youthful blood and unripe reason. Their occupation is always at their own choice. A very little study will enable them to go through the ordinary exercises; while temptations of all kinds, and the influence of example, are constantly persuading them to do exactly that which they ought not to do. Often these excesses, indulged in early life, entail upon their victims years of misfortune, penury, or disgrace;—sometimes even more disastrous results have been known to come of them; and it is an instance of the latter description that has furnished the story you are about to hear. It was related to me by an officer in the service of the King of Prussia, with whom I travelled from Geneva to Basle in the course of the last year. The conversation happening to turn on the state of the German universities, he told me this story. I am quite sure he believed in the truth of every syllable that he uttered. He began, as well as I recollect, in this manner:—

It was early in the last century, on the eve of an All-hallows Day, that a set of riotous young men, the greater part of whom were students of the university of Göttingen, were seated round the table of a public tavern near the college. The bottles had circulated so rapidly that many of the boon companions were lying beneath the table, joining in the revels only by an occasional half-uttered imprecation or a loud snore. By

slow degrees the party dwindled away. The drawers carried off such of the roysterers as could not walk, and such as could reeled home to their beds. It was eleven o'clock; one solitary waiter lay sleeping upon a chair in the corner of the room; and of the late noisy and numerous company there were but two left whose brains had resisted the stupifying effect of their debauch. One of them was Leopold Von Desterreich, a student; the other was a captain in a regiment of Jägers, then quartered in the town: his name was Schwartzwald.

In the whole university there was not any young man who kept up the true character of a collegian with a more assiduous perseverance than Leopold Von Desterreich. He was the only son of a too-indulgent mother; his follies and faults were not only overlooked, but his purse was so amply supplied that he had the means—and, to persons of his age, the inclination is never wanting—to indulge to the uttermost in all the absurdities of Burschenism, as a college life was then called.

The main object of a thorough-paced Bursche's ambition was to assume a behaviour and appearance which should be the wonder of all decent people. To accomplish this object, there was no extravagance or foolery that he would not readily commit. Leopold had distinguished himself by the pertinacity with which he kept up

all the nonsensical customs that had from time to time been introduced by the raw madmen who abounded, and by the ingenuity he had displayed in inventing new absurdities.

He had fought more duels than any other man in college; and was so fond of this method of displaying what he thought his valour, that he would even take up the quarrels of other men, and fight them out. He wore his beard and mustachios of an unbecoming and even filthy length. His hair was suffered to hang in loose curls upon his shoulders. His boots were large and heavy; and his spurs were of such a size, and made so sonorous, that they might be heard from one end of a street to the other. A studied negligence was apparent in his dress; and he even rubbed holes in the elbows of his new coats, that he might, in no respect, forfeit the character of a fierce academical sloven. It was acknowledged universally that he could smoke more tobacco and drink more beer than any of his companions; and he performed both of these feats, not because he liked either of them, but because they made him notorious. In short, there was no vagary, which the young and too hot brain of a youth exposed to all the evils of bad example could suggest, that Leopold did not shine foremost in. He fancied that, in doing these things, he gave so many unquestionable proofs of manhood, and that he kept up the

dignity of the academy in a manner worthy of it and of himself.

Notwithstanding all these follies, he was a young man of excellent talents, and of a kind and generous heart. His imprudences were the mistaken excesses of a haughty, but noble, temper, from which experience and a more extended knowledge of mankind could not fail to produce far more worthy results. He was the very soul of honour, the stanch opposer of every attempt at oppression on the part of the superiors, and the firm and liberal friend of all those students whose courage and parts made them respectable, while their limited means prevented them from carrying things with so high a hand as he was enabled to do. He was universally respected by the Burschen, and loved by such of them as knew him more intimately.

Captain Schwartzwald was a soldier: he had upon many occasions shown a great inclination for the company of the students, and was one of the very few persons who, without being of their fraternity, were allowed to join their revels.

He was a profligate daring person, with a most forbidding countenance. His conversation was as odious as his manners were disagreeable. A professed free-thinker in matters of religion—by turns a bully and a sycophant, but always ready to back his opinions and his insolence with his

sword—he was feared and hated by most of the Burschen, to whom, however, he contrived, upon many occasions, to make himself useful. His example was infinitely pernicious among young men already too apt to be seduced into wrong: and he was so well known to be a corrupter, that every new-comer to the university was cautioned by the rectors not to associate with him.

Leopold neither feared the captain nor any other person; but he hated him cordially, and to this feeling he added an utter scorn of him. In the first hour of their acquaintance they had quarrelled, and had fought in consequence. Leopold was wounded in the duel by an unfair blow, as he thought. The seconds, however, decided

The soldier and the student now sat smoking their large pipes, and puffing the dense clouds into each other's faces with a very laudable diligence: the bottle was stationary, and one of those deep pauses prevailed which sometimes ensue after very noisy revels. At length Leopold broke the silence.

"Captain," he said, "you and I are the only honest men in Göttingen. You see the whole pack of those noisy curs, who but now were barking so loudly, have drawn off; and, spite of good wine and good company—for the wine is excellent, and such company as yours and mine is almost as good—the drowsy sots have sneaked into their beds. May the devil rouse them for it!"

"Amen," said the captain, as he set down his empty glass; "but I wish little Reichard had staid. When he gets sufficiently drunk he grows devout, and tells stories about saints and miracles, that are more comical, and not less true, than the 'Fairy Tales.'"

"You, captain," said Leopold, "are little better than an atheist. You have been trying to convert little Reichard from the faith of his fathers to your own no-belief: but you can't succeed; he is a worthy pillar of the church, and defies the foul fiend. What is the matter with the dog, that he howls so?" he asked, as a large black

hound that always accompanied the captain whined.

"He doesn't like cant," replied the captain.

"Then I wonder he remains your dog so long; for you have been pouring the cant of infidelity (which is no less hypocritical than Reichard's) into the ears of all the striplings that would listen to you, until there is not as much piety amongst us as would serve a monk."

"Piety!—*You* talk of piety!" said the captain with a sneer.

"Under your favour, noble captain," said Leopold, "I do not talk of piety in my own person; I only mean to say that you are one of the most impious and mischievous incendiaries that ever got within the walls of a college, to the ruin of foolish young fellows: not that you ever did me any harm; for, although I am not vain, I do think myself a match even for you in almost all shapes of wickedness. I mean, however, to take up, and mend; and as the first step towards it, since my pipe is out, I'll empty the bottle, and away to my truckle-bed."

"What, thou turned sneaker too!" said the captain; "thou flinch from thy liquor, like a shoemaker's 'prentice, who fears a drubbing from his master!—Nay, then, if thou goest, all good fellowship is gone."

"Why, look ye, soldier," said Leopold, "I

like drinking as well as another man; and I have been trying for the last five hours to see you under the table, without being able to make the least impression on you. By all the gods of antiquity, I think that every hair in those black mustachios of yours acts as a conduit-pipe to carry off the fumes of the wine you drink, or you could never stand it! Now, I am as decently drunk as any gentleman could wish to be; while you sit there with your imperturbable ugly black face, and, saving that you look more stupid, you are, for aught I can see, as sober as when you begun."

"You do me honour, most learned flower of college wit," replied Schwartzwald; "but, if I'm not so drunk as you would have me, I am no less a good fellow: I'll join you in any plan of rational amusement you like to propose. Shall we take a walk? Shall we storm the governor's house, and run away with his nieces? Shall we break into St. Ursula's convent, where the blue-eyed girl is going to take the veil, and prevent her locking up so much beauty from the world? Any thing that is mad and wicked, and I'm your comrade."

"'Tis All-hallows Eve," said Leopold, "Hark how the wind blows! the devil and all his imps are riding on the night-blast! Would you walk on such a night? Do let the dog be turned

out," he added, as the animal again whined loudly.

"I like to hear the wind," said Schwartzwald; "and, as for the devils, surely you, who defy almost every thing in this world as well as in the other, don't pretend to care two straws for all the fiends that ever plagued the earth."

Schwartzwald knew very well that the only thing that Leopold feared—if he feared at all—was the agency of supernatural beings; but he knew also that he would rather die than confess so much. The soldier had discovered *this point* in his companion's character, and he was resolved to persist in his attack upon it.

"Come," he continued, "if you really don't fear the devil, and would like to run the chance of meeting a pretty wench, take a stroll with me to the house of the old witch, Alice, and let us have our fortunes spelt."

Leopold had two reasons for not refusing this invitation, which he, nevertheless, shuddered at the thought of accepting. He would not have had Schwartzwald fancy that he was really influenced by superstitious fears; and he knew that the hovel in which old Alice resided was constantly resorted to by the young girls of Göttingen, who believed that she could tell them their future fortunes. Nothing, he thought, was more probable than that he should find some of

them on the present evening; and the lateness of the hour was in favour of this supposition, because, for Alice's sake, as well as their own, these consultations must be kept profoundly secret. Fathers are in general very great enemies to such practices: there is no persuading them that fortune-tellers are not thieves and impostors, and that all kinds of danger may not ensue to young girls who visit these illicit prophets. A zealous constable, who, besides his own hatred and horror of witchcraft, had reason to deplore his only daughter having thrown herself away upon an idle ruffian, whom old Alice had pointed out as the girl's future husband, once went so far as to get a stake and a tar-barrel ready for the sorceress; and, but for Schwartzwald, and some of his Jägers, who rescued her, she would have enjoyed a foretaste of that punishment to which all the charitable people of Göttingen, who thought about the matter, believed she was inevitably destined. Her house was well known to be a place of resort for inquisitive young girls, whose curiosity will sometimes lead them to affront dangers, the mere mention of which, under a less powerful excitement, would frighten them into fits.

"Come," said the captain again, "will you go and have a peep in the old hag's magic mirror?"

"Have with you then willingly," cried Leo-

pold; and, quitting the tavern, they sallied forth into the street.

It was now twelve o'clock. The night was totally dark; not a star was visible through the thick black clouds which palled the heavens. The wind blew in fierce gusts; and, as it rushed through the ample sky, shrill sounds, which seemed horrible and unnatural, were mingled with its fitful blasts. The old houses shook, the signs creaked in the wind, chimneys were heard to fall into the silent streets, window-shutters flapped, and watch-dogs howled. The hoarse cry of the sentinels placed in different parts of the city were the only human voices to be heard; and these, as they mingled at certain intervals with the other noises of the night, seemed like the shouts of roving demons. Nothing could be more gloomy, nor oppressive to the spirits, than this weather; and Leopold, more than once, wished that he had never begun the adventure.

"We shall be sure to find company at the old crone's," said Schwartzwald: "the girls will be afraid to return home while the wind blows thus."

"A man need have some inducement to go out on such a night," replied Leopold; "I mean something beyond that old woman's juggling. —I look for some pretty wenches; and, if I nd them, they shall pay for it. I won't take

all this trouble for nothing; nay, if I should even find some of those fiends, which, as, folks say, visit the old sorceress, provided they come in the shape of young and pretty women, I will boldly make love to them." Leopold said this merely for the sake of saying something, and for keeping up the character of a dare-devil, which he had got. He knew Schwartzwald was a man, who, if he gained the slightest advantage over him in the way of ridicule, would not fail to bring upon him the quizzing of all their companions.

"Well said, Orlando Innamorato!" replied the soldier; "even such a cold wind as this, I see, cannot cool hot young blood;—but here we are at the gate." He gave the word, which, as an officer of the guard, he was acquainted with; and being, moreover, well known, he and his companion were permitted to pass.

They quitted the town, and struck into a path diverging away from the road, which led them on to a barren heath. A quarter of an hour's rough walking brought them to a low hovel, the lights in which they had seen some time before they reached it. A loud sound of laughter, mingled with screams, was heard, but ceased as the soldier and the student approached. The lights, too, were extinguished; and, by the time the visitors were at the door, all was dark and silent.

"This is odd," said Leopold: "it seems we are just too late; the revelling is finished."

"We shall make them begin again," replied Schwartzwald. "After coming so far, and in such a night, we must enforce old Alice's hospitality."

He knocked sharply at the door with his sabre-hilt, and his dog set up a loud and disagreeable bark.

Immediately afterwards the door was opened, and the withered face of the wretched beldame, who called herself the mistress of the hovel, was seen by the light of a small lamp which she bore.

"How now, mother?" cried Schwartzwald;

it seemed that the old woman had been regaling when her visitors interrupted her supper. This consisted of some of the coarsest bread of the country, and a raw onion. A starved black cat was lying near the fire, and was not disturbed either by the entrance of the student and the soldier, or by the black dog of the latter, with whom she seemed to be on very good terms.

Leopold looked about in astonishment: he was sure that he had seen lights and heard sounds of rude merriment a few moments before; and he was sure too that they could proceed from no other place than the room he was in, which now was as dull and gloomy as a midnight tomb.

"Come, mother," said Schwartzwald, "we thought to have found some of the lasses of Göttingen here, who had come to see their future husbands in your famous mirror."

"What! on this night?" cried the old woman.

"Aye! why not?" said Schwartzwald: "when were mad-cap girls to be frightened by bad weather from what they had set their hearts on?"

"There is not a girl in all Göttingen," said Alice, "that would come out to-night, even if she were sure of getting a husband to-morrow by doing so."

"Come, come, my good old dame," said Leopold, "tell us where you have hidden these young ladies. I am sure that I heard sounds as I came

along the heath, which could be no other than female voices. Beseech them to come forth now, my gentle Sybil; for, if you don't, I must begin to court you. I am pledged to make love to some one this night."

The old hag grinned, and shook her palsied head, swearing over and over again that there was no female in the house but herself.

"You have some wine hidden, if you have no women," said Schwartzwald: "come, produce that, mother, and then we'll talk about the other affairs; but the wine in the first place, for my walk and the night-blast have made me as cold as a corpse."

The old woman removed one of the tiles with which the floor of her hut was paved, and produced, from a hole which it covered, a large old-fashioned flask. She placed it on the table with glasses.

"Come, Alice," said Schwartzwald, "let us have a peep into thy mirror."

"What would'st *thou* see?" asked the old woman emphatically.

"Nay, *I* care not for thy tricks," he replied; "but Meinherr there will like to view some of thy juggling; and I can tell thee also, by way of putting thee on thy mettle, that he has no faith in it—he thinks thee an arrant cheat."

The old woman looked angrily at each of her visitors; and Leopold, who thought that in his

character of guest, and an uninvited one too, it would be the extreme of ill breeding to affront the lady of this noble mansion, disclaimed his friend's imputation, and assured the old woman that he had the highest opinion of her skill.

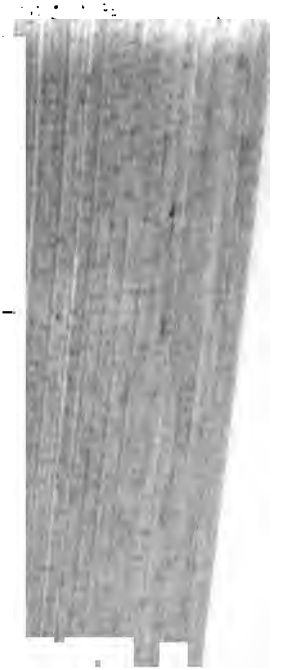
The hag muttered some unintelligible words between her teeth, but in such a manner that Leopold did not know whether his compliment had appeased her, or whether she was still indignant at his want of faith in her practices. He therefore repeated his request that she would permit him to see the mirror.

Schwartzwald, in the mean time, seemed to enjoy mightily the old woman's anger, and Leopold's endeavours to propitiate her. "Come," he said at length, "produce thy charmed mirror, and let us see what is to be our destiny."

"The mirror is destroyed," said the old woman; "and, if it were not, you know it is against the laws to make use of it."

"Thou dost mistake, gentle Alice," said Schwartzwald, "it is not destroyed; and, when thou talkest of laws, for whom dost thou take us? Are we Philistines?* are we meek and hypocritical tradesmen? are we like the quaking citizens who come to consult thy art about stolen spoons; and who, if they cannot find them, would denounce thee, or doom thee to that

* In college slang it is common to call the citizens and tradespeople *Philistines*.



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Leopold had, in spite of himself, been in some degree overawed by the hag's manner, and the caution of her preparations. He hesitated as to what he should choose.

"I should like," said Schwartzwald, "to see the place of my burial, as, in all probability, when I visit it for the last time, I shall not be able to recognise it."

"Thank you for the hint," said Leopold; "it shall be so;—shew me my grave."

The curtain was heard to be slowly withdrawn, and Leopold saw a small square mirror before him, which was perfectly distinct, and in which light seemed to be reflected, although there was none in the chamber. He looked again, and the surface appeared to be dulled, as if by some vapour passing before it. This soon cleared away, and he saw within the mirror a sight which rivetted his attention. A small square enclosure, surrounded by high walls, and thinly planted with cypress-trees, seemed to lie before him. The walls were like those of a cloister, and were covered with a climbing shrub: the branches of some acacia-trees, loaded with blossoms, hung over; and in that part which was opposite to him, and beyond them, he saw the spires of a building, which seemed to be either a church or a monastical establishment. Looking down, he perceived that the small enclosure was thickly covered with graves, on each of which a small

wooden cross had been placed, and flowers thickly planted. One grave was open, as if it had been just dug: he looked upon the wall against which this open grave was made, and he saw upon it a marble tablet, with an inscription. He gazed upon the tablet, and read his own name, "Leopold Von Desterreich," in large and distinct letters. An emotion, for which he could not account, held him fixed to the spot: he rubbed his eyes, to be sure that he was under no delusion; still the silent burial-ground lay before him—still his own name seemed to be uttered from the marble on which it was written, and to ring in his ears as well as to pain his eyes. A cold sweat settled upon his brow—his head turned round—and he would have fallen but for Schwartzwald.

The hag, who knew well enough, although she could not see, what was going on, called out, in an almost unearthly voice, "You have looked upon it once—of the third time beware!"

A hollow and discordant voice, which he believed to be hers, then groaned, rather than sung—

"Hither, hither, shall you come;
This your last and lowly home.
Wheresoe'er your way you bend,
Hither must your travel tend:
Roam the earth, or swim the deep,
Hither, hither, still you creep,
In this dull cold bed to sleep."

While this melancholy strain still lingered in his ears the curtain was again drawn, and the lamp lighted. Leopold felt sick at heart, and could not rally his strength so as to reply to Schwartzwald.

"Why, zounds!" said the soldier, "the old woman has frightened you indeed."

Leopold heard the taunt, but he could not reply to it.

"Here," said Schwartzwald, pouring him out a large glass of wine, "try this never-failing specific against the blue and every other sort of devils."

Leopold swallowed the wine, which was at once delicious and powerful: his spirits returned, his heart glowed, and even more than his wonted animation pervaded his frame. He felt a powerful excitement, and laughed aloud, all the fears which the sight of the grave had occasioned being forgotten.

"Why, what matters it," said Schwartzwald, "where a man is buried? We shall all be in our graves some day, perhaps; and the knowledge where they are situated cannot bring them one step nearer to us. Drink, then; and, let Death come when he will, he shall find us properly prepared for the journey, as far as good liquor can prepare us."

Leopold filled his glass again, and, as he drained it, a noise like that of suppressed

laughter was heard at the door. Old Alice opened it, and began to talk to some persons who were standing on the outside. It was soon apparent that the new-comers were females; and Leopold, who was now in very high spirits, leaped from his chair, and, rushing to the door, swore that, whoever they were, they should enter. Schwartzwald followed him, and they dragged in two girls, whom they found talking to Alice.

The wenches struggled a good deal, and seemed very averse to entering the cottage: but the two gallants were men not to be denied; by main force the fair ones were seated near the fire, and their cloaks taken off.

Leopold pressed his suit very vigorously; he was going through the forms usual on such occasions, swearing all those oaths which he had found to prevail often before, and which your accomplished lover always swears, and never means to observe, when Schwartzwald slapped him on the shoulder.

"Bravo!" he said, "you redeem your pledge bravely: you said that you would make love even to fiends if they should come in your way; and who do you think our friends here are?"

"I think they are very true flesh and blood, and no fiends, but the daughters of some good Philistines of Göttingen."

"To see how a man may be imposed on, now! and a learned man too—a student—a sage

that is to be! But I must undeceive you. Know, then, most renowned *Bursche*, that you have been gulled, and that you have fallen into a trap I have long laid for you. I thought that your daring impudence and rashness must at some time or other yield you into my hands, and that all the pains I have taken with you could not be thrown away. Once I was as you are; now it is my business to make such as you are what I am. Your profligacy and your audacity have made you an easy prey to me; and you have this night, by dabbling in forbidden, and, as you would call them, unholy things, sealed my power over you. Still I would rather be your friend than your foe; and, if you will give yourself up to me voluntarily, I will secure to you all the happiness that, in your wildest moments, you ever dreamed of. Refuse this, and it shall be my business to poison every moment of your life—to drive you to despair and to death by torments at which you now cannot even guess. How say you?"

Leopold was stupified. The hellish potion he had drunk had bewildered his senses; the events of the night—the horror of the open avowal of Schwartzwald, or the demon, as he now seemed to be—had shaken his reason to its very centre. He looked around, and saw that the two supposed girls were as old and as ugly as Alice; and they all three now stood together

in a group, with their sunken glazed eyes fixed upon him, waiting to know whether they should hail him as a brother or not. He gasped for breath, and, putting his hand to his neck, he opened his collar. As he did this he felt a small cross, which his mother, who was a very pious, but superstitious woman, had caused to be made from an unquestionable relic of St. Anthony's staff, and which she believed was a never-failing preservative against witchcraft and evil spirits. Upon this occasion it brought back to Leopold's recollection subjects which he had but too long neglected. He thought of his mother—of the care she had taken in training his infancy to pious habits: he remembered the satisfaction he had once taken in the practices of devotion, and a ray broke in at once upon the dark despair that had begun to overspread his heart. He grasped the cross; his courage revived; and with a great effort he said to Schwartzwald, "In the name of Heaven, and of the God of Heaven, I defy thee!"

A loud scream burst from the hags, and Schwartzwald advanced to him with a threatening gesture. Leopold drew his sword, and made a fierce lunge at him. The sword glanced off his breast; and the captain, or, as he should now be more properly called, the demon, seized Leopold by the throat. The youth felt his strength was unavailing: he struggled, but it was in vain; he

fell, and saw the eyes of the demon glare exultingly over him. The power of sensation forsook him; he believed he was dying, and uttered a groan, with which, as he imagined, his spirit departed from him.

On the following morning some peasants, going to their work, found what they took at first to be the corpse of a man, lying near the town-wall. They carried it into the city, and, medical aid being procured, the body was found still to possess animation. Proper remedies were applied, and the sufferer recovered. He was soon recognised to be Leopold; and, some of his companions hearing of the affair, he was carried by their direction to his rooms, where he was placed under the care of the persons who usually attended him.

He gradually recovered, and, when he was well enough to reply to questions, he was eagerly importuned by his friends to tell them the particulars of the adventure which had brought him into the situation in which he had been found. Before he attempted any explanation he inquired after Schwartzwald. He was told that the captain had disappeared ever since All-hallows Night; and that, from the time they had quitted the town together, no tidings had been heard respecting him.

Leopold could not make up his mind to detail all the circumstances of the horrible night he had spent in Alice's hovel; but, as his com-

panions were entitled to some portion, at least, of his confidence, he told them that he had accompanied Schwartzwald thither, where he had seen sights of the most dreadful kind, and which it would be so painful to him to describe, that he must be excused from attempting to do so.

His friends were, of course, not satisfied with this account; but they saw from his manner that they had no more to expect from him, and they ceased their importunities. As, however, might have been expected, they did not keep their suspicions secret; and, their ignorance of the real facts exaggerating the wrong notions they had formed, they whispered about that Leopold had been dealing with the devil, and that he had fared the worst in the business. It soon got wind, and the young gentleman's reputation was torn to pieces amongst the malignant and curious people with whom the university abounded.

By slow degrees Leopold recovered his health, but the tranquillity and self-possession, which even his excesses had not before been able to disturb, seemed now to have fled for ever. He was not ill; but a heavy weight hung upon his mind, and prevented him from enjoying any of the amusements which had formerly given him so much delight. His courage, and the fiery temper of his mind, were still unsubdued: he looked back upon the events of the dreadful All-hallows Night with horror, but not with fear. He de-

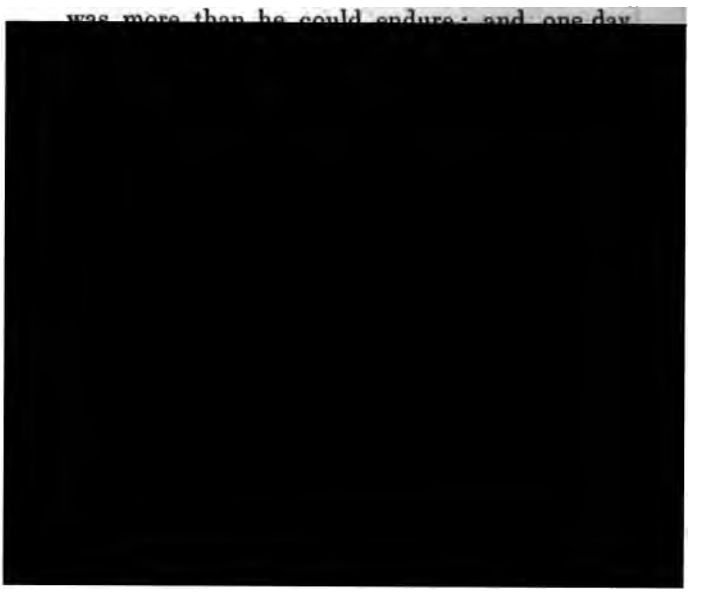
spised the dark powers which had assailed him; but mingled with his scorn was a feeling that their spells had power over him, and that a clankless and invisible chain fettered his very heart.

Among the follies into which he had plunged was that of affecting a scepticism—even of expressing exulting doubts as to the veracity and efficacy of the principles of religion. This he had been rather induced to do by the contagious effect of example, and by that braggart spirit which is common to very young men, than because he was sincere in the opinions he gave utterance to.

In the sickness of heart that now oppressed him he became convinced of his error, and in the religious impressions of his infancy he alone found consolation. Still he was too proud, and too much afraid of the ridicule of his late companions, to avow openly his belief, or to attend the regular offices of the church, but performed in secrecy and in solitude these devotional exercises, which afforded him some relief, and which increased his hatred and contempt of the demoniacal influence under which he suffered.

At length he resolved to seek his late friends, in the hope that their society would dispel some of that heavy melancholy which weighed upon his heart. Here, however, he found himself doomed to experience another disappointment: instead of being received as usual with open arms,

and hailed as the flower and chief ornament of the academical youth, he found that he was treated with a cold and formal politeness, which was as far removed from a friendly feeling towards him as it was from affording him an opportunity of resenting the altered behaviour of his friends. This was the unkindest cut of all: he requested an explanation from some of his most intimate acquaintances, all of whom declared that their affection for him was unabated, and insisted that the change of which he accused them existed only in his own fancy. He soon found, too, that he was an object of curiosity to many men of the university, and that he was pointed out to new-comers as a sort of wonder. This



He went home, expecting, of course, to receive a message from this person, appointing the time and place at which he would be required to give him satisfaction; for duelling was then of daily occurrence in the university. To his astonishment, however, instead of a challenge, he received a visit from a captain of the city guard, who summoned him to repair, under the escort of himself and a file of his men, to the council-room of the university. Leopold immediately obeyed; and, on his way to the council, he learnt from the captain that he was called upon to answer for having beaten one of the collegians. This was so unheard-of a way of settling such a dispute among the students, that he was still more surprised at it.

When he arrived at the council-room he found the president and fellows of the college sitting in judgment, and his antagonist ready to prefer his complaint, which he did with no small exaggeration in his own favour.

Leopold was called upon to reply. He disdained even to allude to the misrepresentations which his adversary had resorted to, but at once admitted that feeling himself wantonly, and without provocation, insulted by the student, he had chastised him on the spot; and he added that he was willing to abide the consequences there or elsewhere.

"Yes," vociferated the poltroon who had been

beaten, "it is likely, indeed, that I am to meet in open fight a man who deals with the devil, and who, for aught I know, may bring a fiend for his second."

This taunt furnished Leopold at once with the explanation of the coldness he had experienced from his friends. He saw, in a moment, the reason why his company had been shunned, and his person become a mark for the

> "slow and moving hand of Scorn
> To point the finger at."—

He was so much overcome by anger and shame, that he could not reply but by a look of haughty indignation.

After whispering for a few moments with the fellows, the president began a long harangue to Leopold, in which, without noticing the allusion of the other student, he enlarged upon the necessity of preserving public peace in a place devoted to study; and then, reading one of the edicts of the college, in which the penalty for striking a blow within the walls was declared to be the expulsion of the offender, he pronounced that sentence upon Leopold, and ordered him forthwith to quit the university.

Leopold, in a short and angry reply, declared that he heard the sentence with indifference, and that he would not condescend to avail himself of the opportunity he had of appealing from the impartiality and injustice with which an obsolete

law was thus put invidiously in force; but he denied and threw back the infamous slander which had been uttered against him, and which, he said, had only been used for the purpose of sheltering the cowardice of the person who had resorted to it.

The president replied that this imputation, heavy and horrible as it was, formed no part of the grounds upon which the sentence had been passed; but, as he said this, Leopold saw, or thought he saw, that the old man believed the calumny in its fullest extent.

Disgusted and enraged, Leopold left the chamber and retired to his own, where a short time sufficed to complete the preparations necessary for his departure. The next morning saw him on his way to Switzerland, where he resided for a time. Here he received the news of his mother's death, by which event he became the possessor of a large patrimony. He was, however, not inclined to return to Germany; but, committing the care of his estates to the steward who had managed them for a considerable number of years, he resolved to travel he cared not whither, and solely in the hope of distracting his mind from the contemplation of the thoughts which burdened him. In pursuance of this resolution he crossed the Alps, and entered Italy.

In the hotel at Milan, where he took up his abode, he found some of the officers of a French

regiment then quartered in that city. The inward oppression which almost consumed his life had become still more burdensome while he was alone, and he gladly made acquaintance with these gentlemen, in whose society he found great relief. The manner of their existence was much to his taste, for they mingled with the serious and active business of war the elegant accomplishments and amusements of polite life. Some occupation, he felt, was absolutely necessary for him, and he yielded very readily to their persuasions that he would join them. The commanding officer, who saw that Leopold's high spirit and acquirements would make him a valuable acquisition to the service, offered him a com-

traversing. He was in a remote and unfrequented road among the hills beyond Bergamo; and the eminence which he had attained commanded an extensive view of the fertile country. The setting of an autumnal sun shed a blaze of liquid radiance over the plain, which lay laughing and rioting, as it were, with plenty; while the rich and varied colours of the foliage and the fields glittered under its beams with indescribable splendour. As the march led him through the hills, which sometimes hid the landscape from his sight, and sometimes presented it suddenly and strikingly, Leopold thought he had never seen the beauties of nature in a more fascinating point of view. The day rapidly closed in; and the sounds, which denote the activity of a country life, one by one ceased: the lowing of the homeward-driven cattle, the song of the husbandman, the horn of the shepherd, and the deep-mouthed baying of his dogs, died away gradually; and now nothing was heard but the melancholy notes of the vesper-bell—fit music for such an hour.

Leopold thought of the beautiful verses of Dante; and, although he had no friends to whom his heart turned as the time and place softened and saddened it, yet there was a yearning after some such object, on which its affections might rest, which made him feel his utter desolateness still more. Tears, such as he had not shed

for many a day, started to his eyes as he repeated—

Era già l'hora che volge 'l desio
Ai naviganti, e'ntenerisce 'l core
Lo dì, c'han detto a i dolci amici, A dio;
E che lo novo peregrin d'Amore
Punge, se ode squilla di lontano,
Che paia 'l giorno pianger che si more.*

Before the day had quite closed the detachment had reached the place at which they were to halt for the night: it was called the Convent of Santa Croce, and was situated upon a gentle eminence, commanding the whole of the view which had so much delighted Leopold.

The appearance of the French soldiers threw the fair recluses into no small embarrassment. A party had been dispatched to announce the arrival of their companions; and the abbess had made such good use of the time which this afforded her, that all her flock were safely locked up in the higher chambers of the building, and

* The late lamented Lord Byron's translation of this exquisite passage—to all but to him untranslateable—is so beautiful, that I reckon upon being thanked for inserting it.—*Ed.*

Soft hour, which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart—
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way,
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay!

Don Juan, Cant. iii. St. cviii.

beyond the profane touch of the French soldiery. Experience had taught the necessity of this precaution; for, notwithstanding the devoted sanctity of the gentle nuns, there had been instances of their not being able to withstand the persuasions of *les braves*; and, during the campaign, many of the fair sisters had renounced their rash vows of celibacy, and had become the wives of the soldiers. The abbess of St. Ursula was of such incorruptible piety, and the strictness of her discipline was so famous, that she had no reason to fear the backsliding of any of her holy sisterhood; but, although she was fully convinced of this, yet, like a very prudent old lady, who had been once young, she thought there was great virtue in a lock and key, and she therefore had every one of her flock, with the exception of the lame porteress, whose ugliness was a sufficient protection to her virtue, fairly fastened up until the troops should have departed.

She, however, had provided for the reception of the soldiers, who found a repast prepared for them in a large out-building, and where also they were to take up their abode. The officers and Leopold were her own guests, and were received by her in her parlour, where a simple, but elegant, supper was laid out. The abbess was a lady whom the misfortunes of her noble family, and the changes of affairs in the country, had driven to a cloister. She was a well-informed and

agreeable woman, and engaged unreservedly in the conversation with which the evening was consumed. It was nearly time to retire, when one of the officers, attracted by the beauty of the evening, proposed a walk in the garden of the convent, which was seen through the windows of the room where they were sitting.

This suggestion met with universal approbation, and, Leopold offering his arm to the abbess, the whole party quitted the parlour. The garden was disposed with great taste, and was well filled with flowers and fruit-trees, exhibiting—as, indeed, every thing about the convent did—the good taste of the person who presided over it. The soldiers complimented the old lady upon the beauty of her garden; and, as this was one of those innocent enjoyments in which she indulged, and of which she was rather proud, their praises were highly gratifying to her.

"There is another part of my domain," said she, "which, although it is somewhat melancholy, looks so very beautiful by moon-light, that I will show it you, if you will permit me."

"By all means" was uttered simultaneously by the whole party.

"It is the cemetery," she said; and, calling to the gardener, she bade him unlock a door in the garden-wall.

They entered the burial-ground, which was one of the most striking that, perhaps, was

ever beheld. The moon was now declining, and threw its strong broad light against one side of the square, while the other was in deep shade. Cypresses were thickly planted within the square, and the white marble pillars of the cloisters which surrounded it shone in the clear moonlight between their black trunks and their sorrowful motionless foliage.

"This cemetery," said the abbess, "is one to which I have almost become attached; and, weak as you may believe it, I should feel great pain if I thought that my bones were destined to rest in any other. The perfect tranquillity which prevails here—the beauty of the situation—those eternal mourners, the cypresses—the soft broad gleams of the moon's light—all combine to make it, in my opinion, most fit for the calm resting-place of mortal bodies, until that change which is to transfer them to another sphere shall take place. This is, I know, a weakness, and you must think I am wrong to indulge in it; but, when you consider how much our lives are swayed by fancies, you will find some excuse for me."

Leopold assured the abbess that he thought her selection so good a one that it needed no apology.

They had now walked down one side of the quadrangle, and had passed under that cloister which was in shade. On turning out of it a

sight met Leopold's eyes, which fixed him to the spot with astonishment.

The moon, which was now at his back, shone full upon the wall of the opposite cloister;—behind it arose the acacia-trees, loaded with their white streaming blossoms, and waving like plumes in the soft night-air. In the distance were seen the slender white spires of the convent, against which the moon-beams fell, and showed distinctly the richly-carved crochets which decorated them. In short, he saw the very scene which he had beheld in the mirror at old Alice's hovel!—He looked again at the wall nearest to him. The stone upon which, in the mirror, he had seen his name inscribed, was not there; but the branches of a clematis that had been trained against the wall had left a square space of exactly the size of the tablet of his vision. Nothing was wanting but the name. He gazed at it with horror; a cold sweat stood upon his brow, and a groan burst from his overcharged bosom.

"You are unwell, I fear," said the abbess, who saw the paleness of his face, and felt the trembling of the arm she held.

Her voice recalled Leopold to himself. "I find the night-air chill," he said; "and the length of the march has fatigued me more than usual. With your permission we will return."

The company proceeded back to the convent, and Leopold was able to master his emotion so well that his momentary indisposition was universally believed to have arisen wholly from the cause to which he had attributed it. Having taken some wine, at the entreaty of the abbess, he retired to his chamber.

In vain he attempted to sleep: when he closed his eyes the scene in the cemetery was as vividly before his sight as it had been when he gazed on the real substance. At length, feverish, and worn out with tossing in his bed, he arose, and went to the window. Upon opening it he found that it commanded a view of that part of the garden which adjoined the burial-ground, where it had been foretold his own grave should be dug. The moon was now nearly sunk, the night-breeze had freshened a little, and, blowing against the tall cypresses, they seemed to beckon him towards the narrow spot which at some period he believed must be his own. He gazed at them until, his fancy aiding the impressions he had before received, he became convinced that this was the place destined for his dissolution—perhaps this was the very time when that event was to happen.

As he pondered over the events of his life, and reflected on the bitterness with which they had been tinged since the fatal All-hallows Night, he felt little occasion to regret even if

this should be his fate. At this moment the notes of the organ in the chapel of the convent fell upon his ear; and, soon after, the voices of the nuns were heard in celebration of the funeral office for one of the sisters who had lately died. Leopold listened: the coincidence was so striking, that for a moment he could have fancied that his apprehensions had been realized, that he had in truth ceased to exist, and that it was for him that these midnight orisons were sung.

It was not long, however, that he remained under this delusion. Shaking off, by a violent effort, the thick-coming fancies which crowded upon his brain, he recommended himself to the protection of Heaven; and, resolving that he would no longer vex himself with speculating upon an accident, which, however frightful it had been rendered by circumstances, he could neither prevent nor hasten, he closed the window, and retired again to his bed, where his attempts to sleep were more successful.

He rose in the morning refreshed by his rest, but he could not entirely get rid of the seriousness which the sight of the burial-place had occasioned. After breakfasting with the abbess the order for marching was given; and, having bidden the old lady farewell, the whole party set off from Santa Croce.

Leopold felt relieved when he had quitted the convent; and, as he pursued his journey, the

conversation of his companions, and, still more, the increasing distance which every step put between him and that place of terror, contributed to restore his cheerfulness. When they had passed the Alps orders were received for the return of the troops into France, where they were to go into quarters; and Leopold, not choosing to accompany them in the dull country life they were about to lead, went to reside at Berne with some others of the officers, who had obtained leave of absence, intending to rejoin the army at the commencement of the next campaign.

In the festivities of Berne, which has the invidious reputation of being the most gay of all the towns of Switzerland, Leopold thought he should find the means of passing the winter very agreeably. Society had become necessary to him, as the only means of dissipating the disquiet which often assailed, and sometimes depressed him.

He had been living here for some weeks, when one day, as he entered the church on a religious festival, he saw a procession of young girls passing along the aisles, and collecting the contributions of the devout people who filled the church. His attention was particularly attracted by the sight of so much loveliness engaged in so pious an office.

The cunning directors of the Romish church, who have always been deeply versed in the

feelings of the human heart, and the means by which they may be profitably assailed, have been continually in the habit of resorting to the agency of youth and beauty, among other expedients, for the purpose of exciting charity. On the present occasion they had been extremely happy in their selection, for every one of the girls who formed the procession was distinguished for personal charms, and none of them had yet reached the age of eighteen years.

One among them attracted the attention of Leopold by her remarkable beauty, which even the neighbourhood of so many other lovely faces only rendered still more striking. She appeared to be about seventeen years old, and the bloom of

improvements upon humanity, and which, while they seem to defy comparison with any known models, deserve all the praises which have been bestowed upon them: like them, it possessed that characteristic *sovrumana bellezza* which commands universal admiration. It would be impossible to describe accurately such a face; and, if the imaginations of the hearers cannot supply them with an adequate notion of it, it must even go undescribed, so totally is it beyond the feeble power of words to do justice to it. An expression of perfect goodness and simplicity added to it the only charm which it could have received.

Leopold gazed with a rapturous admiration that engrossed his whole faculties. The ceremony he had been witnessing had already excited his feelings to a pitch of exaltation and enthusiasm: the solemn music—the loud choir—the fervent responses of the devout congregation—had prepared a mind like his to be easily wrought upon. As he looked now upon the enchanting being, who moved at the head of her companions through the crowded aisle, soliciting the charity of the people, he fancied that she was one of the inhabitants of heaven, who had visited the earth only for the pious purpose in which he saw her engaged.

While he looked at her this notion gathered strength, and, at the same time, a feeling of pure

and holy love mingled with it. He thought that it was through the intercession of such an angel that he could alone hope to gain pardon for his sins, and to shake off the hellish influence which he at once hated and obeyed.

So much was his mind occupied with this idea, that, when the maiden approached him, he knelt down, and, casting his purse into the little flower-woven basket which she carried, he murmured "Pray for me, heavenly Virgin!"

These words were uttered in so low a tone of voice that they could scarcely be heard by any of the persons near him; and, if they had been, their import would, probably, have been misunderstood. The lovely object of them, however, seized at once their meaning, and a deep blush suffused her beautiful features as she passed on.

Leopold remained gazing upon her as she retired; and it was not until the bustle of the persons near him, in leaving the chapel, reminded him of the singularity of his posture, that he quitted it. He arose and went to his hotel, filled with melancholy, but not disagreeable, reflections upon the vision he had beheld.

He could still scarcely persuade himself that it was merely a human being; and when, by dint of reasoning, he had succeeded in doing so, his desire to know more of her became still more powerful.

"In her, perhaps," he said to himself, "I may

find that which I have hitherto sought in vain—one being, beautiful and good, who may furnish me with a motive to live on, and whose virtue and innocence may counteract the dark spell which seems to bind me still. The prayers of such an angel must be efficacious, and will prevail against the banded powers of hell."

His first business was to inquire the name and family of the young lady whose charms had made so sudden and so powerful an impression on him. He learnt that she was the daughter of an Italian gentleman of respectability, whom the changes which had taken place in his native country had driven into exile, and who had now resided in Berne for some years upon the remnant of his fortune. He was a widower; and his daughter, whom he had very carefully educated, was his only child.

Signor Baldini was a man of retired habits, and of austere devotion. He was known to practise the most severe rules of the Catholic church, and he had openly announced his intention of placing his daughter in a convent as soon as she should be of such an age that her own consent might ratify his wishes in this respect. It was believed, too, that the young lady was perfectly willing to comply with her father's desires.

The latter part of the information Leopold heard with some anxiety, and he resolved that no effort should be wanting, on his part, to effect

a change in the destiny of the lovely Laura at least, if not in that of her parent.

He immediately set about finding out some person among his acquaintance, which was numerous, and of the first respectability, who would introduce him to the Signor Baldini. He soon learnt, however, that the retired habits of the old gentleman rendered this almost hopeless; and in the mean time he was obliged to content himself with haunting daily the neighbourhood in which he lived, in the hope of seeing the beautiful Laura, as she might by accident quit or return to her abode.

This, it must be confessed, was as convincing a proof as any man in his senses could well give of being irretrievably in love. Leopold was too little a novice in affairs of the passion not to be aware of this; and he willingly encouraged the growth of an affection which seemed at once to meliorate and to tranquillize his heart.

At length chance afforded him an opportunity of disclosing to Signora Baldini the secret of his soul. He had watched her one day going from her own house to vespers, at the church where he had first seen her. She was accompanied only by a female servant, and when the service was finished she returned to her father's house. On her way she was met by a party of riotous young men, who appeared to have been drinking freely, and who addressed her with some rude and familiar expressions.

The shrinking girl was excessively terrified, and endeavored to avoid these vulgar boys, but in vain. One of them had thrown his arms round her waist, and she had just uttered a faint shriek for help, when Leopold was in an instant at her side, and had dashed her assailant to the earth so roughly, that all his amorous ardour was dispelled in a moment.

The rascal rose as well as he could, and joined his companions, who drew themselves up in a threatening position, and appeared resolved to avenge their companion. They, however, changed their minds as soon as they saw Leopold's sabre drawn, and retired with precipitation, confining the display of their valour to the mere utterance of some unmeaning and disregarded threats.

Leopold assured the trembling girl that she had now no cause for alarm, and begged that he might be permitted to accompany her to her own house, in order to protect her against any further accident.

She thanked him in the most graceful manner, and every word she uttered served to confirm the passion of the enraptured German.

Her fears had magnified the danger in which she had found herself when Leopold's prompt assistance rescued her; and, her gratitude being in proportion to that imaginary peril, she expressed it with all the energy of her character.

She begged that Leopold would permit her

father to thank him for the services he had rendered her; and he, who desired nothing so much as an introduction to the old gentleman, did not say a word in objection to this proposal.

When they arrived at the house, the gentle girl, who was still somewhat agitated, rushed into her father's arms, and told him that she had been assailed by a band of ruffians on her return from church; and added that, but for the assistance of the gentleman who accompanied her, she should perhaps have been killed.

This was not quite true, but she thought it was; and her manner of relating it at once alarmed the old Italian, and called forth his thanks to Leopold, who now felt obliged to disclaim some of the praises which were bestowed upon his courage.

He told Signor Baldini that these redoubtable assailants were probably only artisans, who had been at a short distance from the city to spend the holiday, and whose weak brains the festivities of the occasion had somewhat inflamed. For his own share in the affair he renounced all praise and thanks, because he had merely interfered, as every gentleman must have done, to protect a lady from the annoyance of such persons.

After some further compliments on each side an agreeable conversation ensued, in the course of which Leopold found the signor to be a man of information and polish, although there was a

gravity in his manner—occasioned by the settled sorrow which he had labored under ever since his wife's death—which might, to persons less interested than Leopold, have seemed in some measure repulsive.

The lovely Laura, although she was no longer surrounded by the *prestige* which the place and the occasion on which her lover first beheld her had enveloped her with, was not less charming. The artless innocence and gaiety of her conversation, her pious attention to her father, and the vigilance with which she seemed to anticipate his every wish, not less than her rare beauty, which Leopold now gazed at with still greater admiration than before, confirmed him in the opinion that she was the most amiable and fascinating of created beings.

He staid as long as decency allowed him, and, before he retired, he had obtained permission to wait upon the signor again.

He did not fail to avail himself of this permission at the earliest opportunity; but, to his great disappointment, the real object of his visit, the Signora Laura, was not visible. He, however, passed some time in conversation with her father, in whose good opinion he thought—and he thought justly—he had made some progress. After a few more visits he told the old gentleman that he entertained the most fervent passion for

his daughter, and made a formal demand of her hand in marriage.

"I regret very much the disappointment I must occasion to you by declining the honour you propose to me," said Signor Baldini; "but my daughter is already engaged."

"Is it possible?" cried Leopold in despair; "and does she love another?"

"I speak not of human engagements," replied the signor; "Laura is the devoted bride of heaven."

Leopold breathed again, and, since he knew it was no mortal rival that he had to fear, he returned to the charge.

"But will you not permit me, sir," he said, "to endeavour to engage her affections? Surely beauty and virtue such as hers will be more properly and more serviceably employed in the world, which has need of such examples, than in a cloister."

"But in a cloister," replied the signor, "the possessor of such beauty and virtue as hers—and which even the partiality of a doting father does not, I think, make me overrate—will be protected from the thousand perils and snares with which the paths of the world are strewed."

"And yet, sir," continued Leopold, "the protection of a fond and faithful husband, who would seek his whole happiness in her, and who, in

return, would make her felicity his dearest care, might be a sufficient safeguard even against such perils."

"I know," replied the signor, "that to a young and impassioned lover (such as you say, and as I believe, you are) arguments will not be wanting to induce me to change the resolution I have formed. I do not hesitate to tell you, also, that, if I had to decide upon this matter alone, all your arguments would be in vain, so maturely have I considered the subject, and so firm is my resolve: but, while I am a father, and feel called upon to exercise a father's caution, I have no disposition to exert any authority beyond that. Laura shall judge for herself; she is entitled to make her own choice in so important an affair, and she has discretion enough to make a wise one. I feel obliged to say that my objections to her marrying are not personal as regards you; your family, your fortune, and your character—for, as I have foreseen this event, I have inquired into all these circumstances—are unexceptionable; and, if my daughter resolves not to take the veil, I should prefer you to any other man I know for her husband."

Leopold thanked him for his good opinion.

"You owe me no thanks," replied the old man; "I speak to you quite plainly; and I tell you, besides, as I will not tell Laura, that my wish to see her enter a convent is founded upon

the dying request of her mother. She, who was, perhaps, too much given to superstitious forebodings, told me on her death-bed that she was convinced our child's happiness and existence depended upon her never forming any other attachment than for spiritual objects."

"But, my dear sir," interrupted Leopold, "can you wish that your child's destiny should be entirely influenced by the anxious forebodings of her mother, whose fondness for her child, and whose own ill state of health, may have led her to imagine——?"

"We will discuss this subject no further," said the signor: "I repeat to you, that, if I felt myself at liberty to persuade my daughter, she should

tation, which was caused by her doubting whether the pleasure that filled her bosom was not too intense to be real. She felt as if it was all a gay, brilliant, happy dream, from which she must awake, and the enjoyment of which was diminished by this fear. At length, when she grew more satisfied and assured of the truth, her rapture partook of the enthusiastic nature of her mind. She loved infinitely and entirely; the passion became a part of her existence; and she loved as persons of sensibility love for the first time in their lives, and as none can ever love twice.

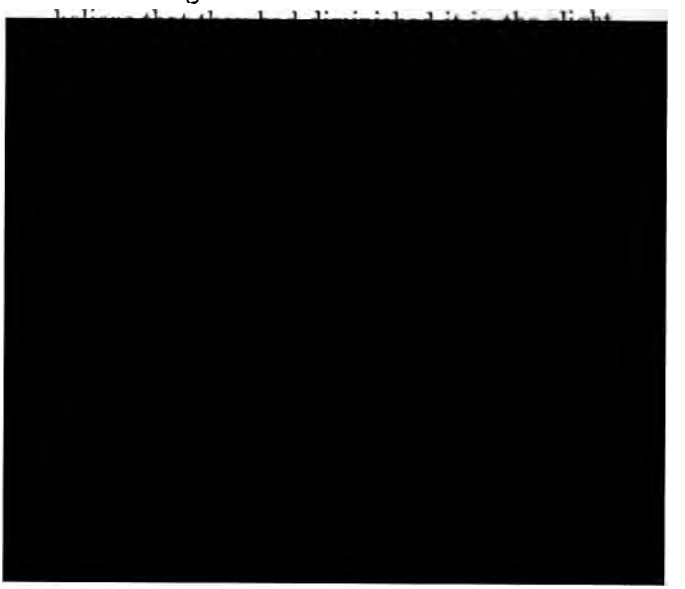
She did not hesitate to avow her feelings to Leopold; and the simplicity and innocence of her character added a thousand charms to the confession.

The earlier part of Leopold's life had been one of professed gallantry. He had sworn, over and over again, that he was in love; and, when he swore thus, he had been perfectly sincere; but now, for the first time in the course of his existence, he found that he had mistaken his feelings, and that the light attachments which he had formerly dignified by the name of love bore a very faint resemblance to that dominant passion. Now, indeed, he loved; for every thing in the world, compared with his passion and its object, was suddenly lowered in the scale of his estimation. His affection, like a pure flame, seemed to have

expelled every dark and unworthy feeling from his bosom, while it filled the space with its own splendour and warmth.

The gloomy cloud which had lowered over him for so many years was dispersed; the weight upon his heart was removed; "his bosom's lord sate lightly on his throne;" and all was laughing joy and sunshine around him.

The Signor Baldini, after the conversation in which his daughter had expressed her affection for Leopold, never reverted to the objections he had so frankly expressed to his future son-in-law; and, although the old gentleman's cheerfulness was in no degree improved, he neither said nor did aught that could induce the lovers to



rites of the church should unite Leopold and his Laura, who were already bound together by a fond and firm passion, which nothing could disunite. At Leopold's request the retired habits of the Signor Baldini and his daughter had been changed, and they had joined some of the festive parties of the city.

On one night they were together at a ball given by the Prussian Chargé d'Affaires in Berne, whither all the most important persons, as well natives as foreigners, who then happened to be in the city, were invited. The assemblage was, of course, very numerous. Among all the beauties of the saloon (and they were many) Laura Baldini shone the most conspicuous, and excited universal attention. Her approaching marriage was quite notorious, and added, perhaps, to the interest which was felt for her. Leopold, too, was now well known in Berne; and the elegance and suavity of his manners, his talents, and his military reputation, had gained him universal regard. His person, too, was hardly less remarkable for manly beauty, than was Laura's eminent among the loveliest of women. They shone in this brilliant assembly, enjoying the admiration and envy of both sexes.

Leopold had so completely got over the gloomy notions which had once entirely poisoned his happiness, that, although he knew this night was the anniversary of that fatal one on which

he had been present at the infernal revels which were held in old Alice's hovel, he never once allowed the circumstance to master him.

Once, indeed, recollection came across him, but the impression which it made was momentary;—it was as he entered the saloon with his lovely Laura on his arm. He heard some person near him say, in German, "This is the famous All-hallows Night." A tremor ran through his limbs as he looked round to see whence the voice had proceeded. A crowd of gentlemen, among whom he recognised no person of his acquaintance, were talking together. He turned, and his glance met the eyes of Laura, sparkling with the anticipated pleasure of the dance: her lovely joyous look restored him to himself, and chased away the thoughts which this accidental expression had begun to conjure up.

The evening passed away rapidly and delightfully. The music—the exhilarating effect of the dance—the lively and agreeable conversation of his companions—and the society of his beautiful bride, who seemed to drink joy from his eyes—contributed to exalt Leopold's spirits to a height they had seldom reached of late years. The days of his youth and innocence seemed to return, and his spirit had thrown off the load which former mispent time, and the sins of hot blood and a restless temper, had burdened it with.

"Now," he said to himself, as he looked on the gay group around—"now, once more, my heart seems to be my own, and all my past sorrows are like an imperfectly remembered dream."

This thought had scarcely passed through his mind, when a voice sounded in his ear, which was at once familiar and horrible. He knew he had heard it before; but he could not recollect in what place, and under what circumstances. He looked about, and yet he could not discover whence it proceeded. Still it sounded in his ear audibly, though he could not distinguish the words it uttered, owing to the suppressed tone in which they were delivered. He turned entirely round; and directly behind him, leaning against one of the pillars of the saloon, he saw the Signor Baldini engaged in deep conversation with a tall man, whose back was turned to him.

"Are you sure it is he?" asked the signor.

"As sure as I am of my own existence," replied the stranger; and as he spoke he turned slowly round.

His eyes fell upon those of Leopold, who, to his horror and surprise, saw in the stranger the same tall student who had been the occasion of his leaving Göttingen.

"This wretch," he said, "pursues me every where. Is it not enough that the pusillanimous slanderer has once made me miserable, but he

must endeavour also to poison my happiness here? He shall pay dearly for his temerity," he added; but, recollecting suddenly that this was not the place nor the time to seek redress for any affront that might have been offered to him, he curbed his resentment, and advanced towards the student and the signor.

The latter was evidently embarrassed at the sight of Leopold and the manner of his approach. The same usual insolent look beamed in the eyes and pierced through the dull and inanimate features of the student, who now wore a military habit, not unlike that of the captain of the guard who had been his companion at Göttingen on the All-hallows Night.

Leopold's agreeable fancies were in a moment dispelled: his mortification increased when he saw, by the manner of Signor Baldini, that his presence was unwelcome as well as unexpected.

"Are you ready to depart?" said the signor: "it grows late." Leopold thought this was uttered with evident embarrassment.

He could not doubt that the altered manner of the signor was caused by something that had been said to his disadvantage by the quondam student of Göttingen. He saw that this was an inconvenience to which he might be exposed as often as the chattering coxcomb who thus harassed him should happen to fall in his way: he

resolved, therefore, at once to put an end to such an annoyance, and turned to seek Laura, whom he intended to have seen to the carriage with her father, and then to return and demand an explanation of his conduct from the insolent person who presumed to interfere with his character.

He looked through the ball-room for Laura, but in vain: he hastened into all the adjoining rooms, but she was not to be found; nor did he meet with the signor in his search. He then inquired of the servants, and learnt that the Signor Baldini and his daughter had gone home.

He was astonished beyond measure that they should have quitted the party without him, and still more that they should have done so without bidding him good night. Some reasons must have induced them to so singular a step, and he could think of none unless they had been furnished by the slanders of his accursed fellow-collegian.

His resentment against this person was heightened as he thought of this; and, viewing his conduct as a direct and premeditated attempt to insult and to injure him, he hastened in search of him, to chastise his impertinence, and to prevent all future annoyance from him.

He caught a glimpse of the object of his search at the further end of the room, and saw

that he was taking his departure. He darted towards him, and reached the hall-door almost as soon as he. He paused here a moment, for he thought it would be better to let his enemy gain the street than to accost him in the hearing of the servants and the guests, who might, in repeating the scene, have given it an injurious colouring.

Waldenburg (for this was the student's name) took his cloak from a servant, and, folding it about him, went down the steps, and turned to walk towards his own hotel. Leopold was in a moment at his side.

"A word with you, sir," he said, grasping his arm at the same moment, and with not the most courteous pressure.

Waldenburg stopped, and gazed at Leopold with that malicious but stupid grin which his features always wore.

"You know me," said Leopold.

"I do," replied the other.

"You have been speaking of me this evening?"

"I have done, then, no more than all the world does."

"I cannot make war with all the world, even if they did as you say; but I can check your insolence, and I will."

"Insolence!—I only said that this time two years you went out to old Alice's hovel, near the city of Göttingen, and mingled in certain hellish

ceremonies, which rendered you unfit for the company of good Christians."

"Liar and villain, draw!"

"I have no sword;" and Waldenburg opened his cloak as he spoke, to prove the truth of his assertion.

Leopold was never better disposed to kill a man than he felt at this moment; but the knowledge that his foe was unarmed checked his rage.

"I am in your debt," he said, "for a civility somewhat of the same nature, and, depend upon it, you shall not go unpaid now. You can procure a sword."

"By day-break to-morrow I can, and will meet you at whatever place you think fit to appoint," replied Waldenburg, with the most provoking coolness.

"Upon the east rampart, then, at five o'clock," said Leopold.

"Agreed, upon one condition, that you bring no second with you: you know that I objected to this on a former occasion."

"I do not condescend to reply to your insolence, since the hour is so near at which your best blood shall pay for it."

"If you beat me only with words I shall not be much harmed. Adieu till five o'clock!" and Waldenburg wrapped his cloak about him and

continued his walk, which had been interrupted by this angry colloquy.

Leopold returned home, where he employed the short time which remained before day-break in writing a farewell to Laura, to be transmitted to her if the result of his encounter should be fatal. This finished, he prepared to meet his adversary, whose coolness had exasperated him nearly as much as his insolence in spreading reports to his disadvantage.

The time having arrived, he buckled on his sword, and left the hotel, as he believed, unperceived. He repaired instantly to the ramparts, where he found Waldenburg waiting.

He approached, and, without a moment's delay, loosening his cloak, he threw it from him; then, drawing his sword, he called to his antagonist to do the same.

"But one moment," said Waldenburg.

Leopold lowered the point of his sword, but did not quit his position.

"I have said nothing," continued the other, "that you need be so much enraged at. There may surely be some less hostile mode of arranging any slight differences between us."

"You should have thought of that before," said Leopold.

"But surely you cannot be so very angry at my having told what you know to be truth."

"If you would not have me attack you at a disadvantage, prepare yourself!" said Leopold, who saw that his adversary's object was to excite his rage. By a great effort he restrained his passion, and displayed no earnest an intention to begin the attack that Waldenburg was compelled to draw in all haste.

"Since you will provoke your own destruction, then," he said, "you will only have yourself to blame if I should kill you here, and old Alice's magic looking-glass be proved false."

Leopold was utterly astonished when he heard this allusion to a circumstance which could only be known to Schwartzwald (of whom nothing had been seen since the fatal night) and to himself. He looked again at Waldenburg, and saw, to his horror and astonishment, instead of the stupid pedant, the demoniac features of Schwartzwald!

"You know me, then, at last!" said the latter with a hellish grin.

"I know and defy thee!" cried Leopold; and he pressed on him with deadly thrusts.

The supposed Waldenburg and the real fiend, as Leopold could now no longer doubt him to be, parried every blow with as much coolness as if he had been practising in a fencing-school instead of being engaged in a mortal combat. He continued at the same time to address Leopold.

"And did you think to escape me after giving

me so much trouble?" he said: "could you suppose I would permit you to marry the beautiful Laura, after you had been false to another fair? Fickle boy!—You have improved in your fence, though. And you would fain turn pious too—you who have so often outraged heaven and earth with your blasphemies!"

These taunts enraged Leopold to such a degree, that he totally lost possession of himself. If his antagonist had chosen to quit his defensive system, and to attack in his turn, he might have soon put an end to the conflict: he, however, continued to parry with imperturbable *sang froid*. At length the desperate impetuosity of Leopold broke through his guard—the sword of the supposed Waldenburg flew several yards from him—and his adversary's weapon must have been through his heart, but that at the same moment he drew a pistol and discharged it at Leopold, who fell instantly.

The fiend stood over him, laughing exultingly. "With my last breath," said the fainting Leopold, "I defy thee!"

A loud noise was at this moment heard, and the voices of persons approaching. The fiend looked over his shoulder, and, without pausing a moment, rushed to the edge of the rampart, from whence he leaped into the fosse. Some of the people who saw him retreating ran towards the spot, but to follow him appeared impracti-

cable. He had, however, succeeded in his attempt to escape, and was nowhere to be seen.

The persons who had arrived at this moment consisted of some of the guard and some peasants, with Leopold's servant. The latter had been aroused by his master's going out at so early an hour; and, suspecting that it was occasioned by some affair of honour, his attachment to Leopold induced him to follow his steps to the ramparts. He saw the adversaries engage, and watched the course of the combat with the utmost anxiety, not daring to discover himself, lest he should encounter his master's anger. He had seen the assassin fire, and then instantly gave the alarm, which brought up the guard and the peasants to his assistance.

When they reached Leopold he was insensible, and they carried him in this state to his own lodgings. His wound was immediately attended, and was found to be highly dangerous. His surgeons ordered that the strictest silence should be observed, and that nothing tending to produce the least irritation should be allowed to approach their patient. After remaining for many days in a weak and almost insensible condition he was pronounced to be out of danger.

His first inquiry was respecting his Laura; and his servant gave him, by the advice of the surgeons, such evasive answers as might put a stop to his questions, without exciting his anx-

iety or his suspicions. It was soon, however, found impossible to deceive him on this subject, and he was informed that, on the morning of his duel, Signor Baldini had departed from Rome, accompanied by his daughter, in a carriage hastily hired for the purpose; but that the cause of their abrupt departure, and the place whither they had retreated, were equally unknown.

Leopold was thunder-stricken at this news; he saw that they had been brought to believe some horrible calumny against him, and he could not doubt that the signor had used or would use this as a further inducement for his daughter's embracing a monastic life. Great as was his affliction at this circumstance, it did not bring with it so profound a despair as had proved

turino, who had brought a family from Venice in his carriage, and who was about to return thither when the signor engaged him.

Leopold was little benefitted in his search by this intelligence, for he could learn no more of the vetturino than that his name was Paulo. His ordinary residence no one could tell—for this simple reason, that he had none. As he was without wife or family he had no need of a home; his business always kept him on the road; and it was an even chance whether he was now at Naples or at Paris, or indeed in any other part of the Continent.

Weeks passed away, during which Leopold remained in a state of most painful suspense, which was more hard to be endured than any thing else in the world, excepting the certainty that he had lost Laura for ever. This belief his heart would never admit; and he consoled himself with the hope that she would—that she must—still be his: so powerful are the delusions of one's own creation, and so easy is it to believe that on which our warmest wishes depend!

One morning Leopold's faithful servant, Baptiste, came to his bedside, his eyes beaming with pleasure.

"At length, sir," he said, "I have found the vetturino who carried away the young lady and old Signor Baldini."

Leopold was out of bed in an instant. "Let

me see him directly," he said: "lose not a moment in bringing him."

"He waits below for your rising," replied Baptiste; "but I fear that you will not be able to make much of him: he is as uncommunicative and as sly a fellow as I ever met with."

"Bring him to me without delay," cried Leopold. Baptiste retired, and, in a few moments, returned with the vetturino.

Paulo was a good specimen of the lower order of the people of the duchy of Milan, whence he came. He was about five-and-thirty years of age: his face was handsome, regular, and prepossessing; his black eyes rolled with an expression of archness and fire which betokened his character; a profusion of black curling hair grew under the small travelling cap which he always wore. His figure was tall, and well proportioned; his dress that of most of the brethren of the whip in his country—that is to say, loose blue linen trowsers, a red waistcoat, with a profuse number of buttons covering its front, and a velveteen jacket, on which were as many more buttons. A thick horsewhip—his inseparable companion—graced his right hand.

"You are the vetturino?" said Leopold.

Paulo bowed.

"You carried the Signor Baldini and his daughter from this city—did you not?"

Paulo shook his head. "I never knew any

persons of that name," he said, with a knowing look.

Leopold saw the fellow was a sort of humorist, and he knew that your humorists are always assailable on one point. He produced his purse. "Come, my good fellow," he said, "you and I must understand each other better. Here are five louis d'or: now, perhaps, you will see that I don't wish to make you useful to me without rewarding you for your communications, and you will disclose to me what you know of the Signor and Signora Baldini."

Paulo pocketed the gold with a still more intelligent grin, while his lively eyes showed plainly that this was a method of dealing infinitely to his taste.

"It is impossible," he said, "not to understand the signor, when he takes such a straightforward way of explaining himself. As I told the signor before, I do not know any such persons as those whose names he has mentioned; but the reason of that is, that they cautiously concealed their real titles, and travelled under others, which they thought fit to assume for the purposes of the journey."

"But they lived in the small house beyond the city gates, on the banks of the Aar?"

"They did," replied Paulo, "and the young lady is as lovely as an angel."

"You say she *is*," said Leopold eagerly: "then

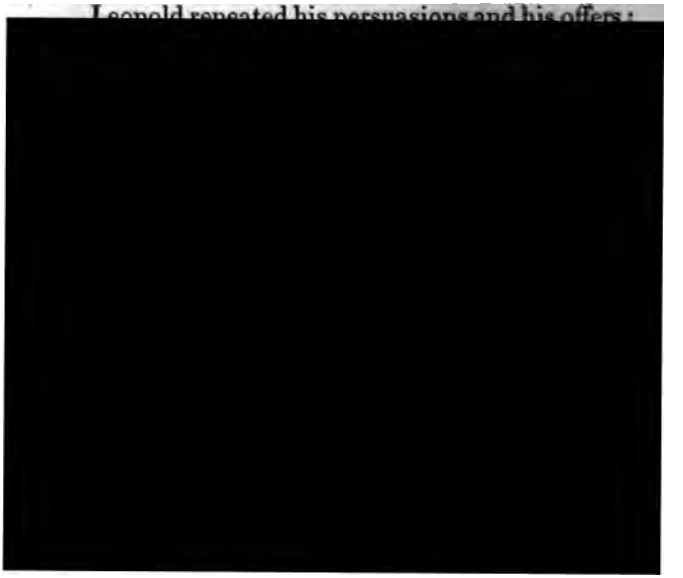
you have seen her lately; tell me where is she—let me fly to her."

"Signor, I cannot tell you where she is."

"Why not? I will give you all I possess in the world. Let me only once more see her—let me call her mine; and my fortune—all that I can command in the world—shall be yours."

"See, now, how hard it is to be an honest man in a world so full of temptations!" cried Paulo with a mock solemn air. "One gentleman gives me fifteen scudi, and makes me swear not to tell whither I carry him; another gives me five louis in hard cash, and a promise of all his fortune, to make me break my oath. What can a poor fellow like me do?"

Leopold repeated his persuasions and his offers;



"But," said Leopold, "are there no means without breaking your oath—which I will not urge you to do—by which you can enable me to find out the place of the Signora Laura's imprisonment? for nothing short of imprisonment would keep her from me."

"There is one way," said Paulo, and, as the thought crossed his mind, his black eyes were lighted up with an unusual lustre—"there is one way, signor; and I think I can meet your wishes, at the same time that I shall save my own faith."

"For the love of Heaven, then, tell it me," cried Leopold.

"I swore, you know," replied the vetturino, "that I would never tell mortal man where the Signora Laura was gone to—and as the blessed Virgin may help me in time of need," he ejaculated, again earnestly crossing himself, "I never will—but I did not swear never to pass the place. If the signor chooses to engage me to carry him to Venice or to Florence, or to Rome, who can tell but that some lucky accident may render it necessary for him to stop exactly at the very place where the Signora Laura may now be living?"

Leopold was delighted with this suggestion; he could have hugged the vetturino for having made it; and, immediately closing with him, he

engaged to give him double the usual sum to take him to Venice.

Paulo quitted him to make the arrangements for setting off on the same evening, for Leopold's impatience to be on the road would allow of no delay. He congratulated himself upon the dexterity with which he had managed to keep his oath inviolate, and yet to make so excellent a bargain with his intended passenger; and perhaps, of the two, although so good a Catholic, he was better satisfied with the latter than with the former achievement.

With the close of the evening the preparations for their departure were completed; Leopold, accompanied by the faithful Baptiste, had taken

Paulo drove his own horses, which obliged the travellers to rest every night on the road. This was sufficiently trying to a person of Leopold's impatient temperament; but so much depended upon the vetturino's information, that he resolved to do nothing which should interfere with the desire which the fellow had to oblige him; and he therefore endured, as well as he could, this tedious mode of travelling.

He asked a thousand questions, and each of them was repeated over and over again, as to what Paulo had been able to observe of the manners of the young lady.

"Poor signora!" said Paulo, "she used to weep almost all day long, until I was sometimes obliged to weep with her, for company. The old signor never wept: he used to talk all about the saints and our holy religion, and then the poor young lady used to weep the more."

"At least, then," said Leopold to himself, "she did not quit me willingly; and it must have been the recollection of me that caused her tears. Dearest Laura," he cried, "the time approaches rapidly when those tears shall be dried, and when not even the power of fate itself shall again separate us."

Baptiste exerted himself indefatigably to draw his master from the melancholy thoughts in which he was too much inclined to indulge. He cracked

jokes with Paulo, who was not behindhand in this "keen encounter of their wits," and who seldom failed to have an answer for the Frenchman.

They passed the Alps, and were descending upon the road towards Como, when Paulo turned out of the main way into a sort of cross road, which he pursued during a whole day. It was so bad that it called forth frequent complaints from Baptiste, who said it was the worst he had ever travelled.

"Never mind, Monsieur Baptiste," replied Paulo; "you would find the road to an enemy's fortress much worse."

"I am not sure of that," replied Baptiste; "for, whether a man has his head shot off or his neck broken, ought, as it seems to me, to be a matter of perfect indifference to him; and, for any thing I can see, the latter is like enough to be our case."

"Then, Monsieur Baptiste, you would have the honour of being the very first gentleman whose neck I had been so happy as to break since I had the good fortune to become a vetturino. That must be now nearly twenty-five years ago, for I assumed this distinguished calling in the eleventh year of my age."

"Just at the time when you ought to have been made to feel, instead of being permitted to exercise, a horsewhip."

"Monsieur Baptiste, you are as quarrelsome with my horsewhip as if you had ever felt it."

"I feel it! *Sacre bleu!* I wish you would use it to your tumble-down horses, who are lagging down this accursed hill as if they were drawing a waggon."

"Patience, monsieur, for a minute; you see yonder sign of the 'Three Kings?' There I intend to stop for a few minutes; and, after having presented your mightiness with a cup of as good drink as our host can afford to sell under the name of wine, I shall drink one myself, and then you shall see how my horses will go, notwithstanding they seem a little tired; for, as they say in your country, '*Quand le chevalier a la tête salpêtrée le cheval est toujours bon.*'"

"That is the wisest thing I have heard you say since day-break," said Baptiste, "and the sun is now rapidly sinking."

"To say one wise thing in a summer's day is much more than many men can boast of, M. Baptiste, and I feel much obliged to you for the compliment."

After a short stay at the little inn of the "Three Kings" the travellers resumed their journey. The moon soon arose, and displayed the surrounding scenery, as well as the vineyards and orchards between which the road lay, in the most beautiful and picturesque light.

Leopold endeavored to recollect exactly in

what part of the country they were: but his attempts were in vain; the turn which Paulo had made from the road wholly baffled him. He saw that they were rapidly descending an eminence, but he could not form any distinct notion of the direction in which it led. To ask Paulo would have been a violation of their compact; and he knew, moreover, that it would be fruitless, for the vetturino was quite in earnest about keeping to the strict letter of his promise.

At about eight o'clock in the evening Paulo drew up the carriage at the door of a very small and unpromising inn, and, approaching the *calèche*, he informed Leopold that the day's journey was finished, and that there they were to pass the evening.

"These seem but sorry quarters, Signor Paulo," said Leopold, looking out.

"The signor will be satisfied, I think," replied Paulo significantly.

Leopold alighted and entered the inn, where every thing he saw convinced him that it was one of the most wretched description. He was half inclined to be angry with Paulo for bringing him to such a place, when the vetturino, drawing him aside, said—

"Signor, there is a house near this where you would, perhaps, find a better lodging than in this inn."

"Let us go thither, by all means, then."

"The signor may go if he pleases," said Paulo, "and I will show him the road to it, which lies across yonder vineyards; but, for myself and Monsieur Baptiste, this *bettola* will do as well as the duke's palace."

"Come, then," said Leopold, who had acquired a habit of obeying Paulo, and who thought there was something more than usually knowing in his air and looks, "lead on, if you please, to this other house of reception."

"It is a religious house, signor," said Paulo, loading himself with a small bag which contained Leopold's dressing apparatus.

They set out across the vineyard which Paulo had pointed out. Leopold endeavored to get from him an explanation of his intention in taking him thither.

"I conjure you, Paulo," he said, "to tell me if it is true that I shall meet my Laura here, as I more than guess. For Heaven's sake do not add to my misery by keeping me thus in suspense."

"God knows," said Paulo, "I would not willingly do so; but remember my oath, signor; a poor man has a soul to be saved as well as another; and as we enjoy little happiness in this world, we must not, if we can help it, run the risk of being tormented in the next. You know, signor, you are to seek the Signora Laura every where; and, as this house to which we are going

is filled with religious ladies, surely no place can be so proper to make inquiries in."

Leopold saw at once the drift of the vetturino, and had no longer any doubt that he had brought him by a circuitous route to the place in which Laura was residing, that he might make what he thought a very ingenious compromise with his conscience.

"The signor will remember," said Paulo, "that if any accident should happen to keep him here, and prevent his going on to Venice, that will be no fault of mine."

"I shall remember," said the *delighted* Leopold, "that you are a very honest fellow, and that I have every reason to be satisfied with the way in which you have performed your engagement."

"*Grazie*, signor," cried Paulo, as he skipped on before Leopold, and knocked at the gate of the building, at which they had now arrived. It was a lofty edifice; but as the night had now entirely closed in, and the moon was on the other side of the building, the deep shadow prevented Leopold from discerning its form more particularly.

The door was opened by a sour-looking thin-visaged old man, to whom Paulo told a voluble lie, about the signor being overtaken by night in the road, unable to proceed to the next town, and in such a state of health (having lately recovered from a bad illness) as rendered it impos-

sible for him to pass the night in the only inn which the neighbourhood contained.

The old man retired, and, in a short time, returned. "The lady abbess," he said, "had given permission for the signor's lodging in that part of the building which was set apart for the reception of strangers."

Leopold dismissed Paulo, who bade him good night with an affectionate cordiality, and hinted his wishes in an enigmatical manner that the signor might succeed in his search. "But I fear very much," he added with a knowing grin, "that you will not be able to go on to Venice to-morrow."

Leopold then requested the old man to return to the abbess, and to say that he begged permission to wait upon her.

This was unhesitatingly granted, and he followed the old porter through the narrow passage which led to the parlour of the principal.

The abbess was a prim, but kind-looking, old lady. She received Leopold with an air of stately politeness. He looked about the room, and could have fancied that this was not the first time he had been in it. He thought of the nunnery of Santa Croce, but this abbess was not like the principal of that house; besides, he was convinced of this being situated in a different part of the country; and, upon looking again, he saw that, although the general plan of the rooms

might be the same, that in which he was now sitting was deficient in the severe elegance which characterized the parlour of Santa Croce.

The religious emblems, which are common to all such establishments, were there—the bad painting of the Madonna, and the crucifix, hung against the walls; but the fresh-filled flower-vases were absent, and every description of even allowable ornament was rigorously banished.

Leopold, mastering his agitation as well as he could, approached the abbess, and, telling her his name, said he had come in search of the Signora Laura, who he had reason to believe was now within these walls.

"I assure you," replied the abbess with a cold and formal manner, "that she is not."

"I beseech you, madam," said Leopold—while his features expressed the anxiety and pain of his mind—"I beseech you not to trifle with the feelings of one who is already on the very edge of despair. I implore you, by all that you hold most sacred, not to make two persons utterly wretched. This cannot be the end of true religion; and this, perhaps worse than this, must be the consequence of your separating me from Laura. Our passion is mutual; our happiness—our lives—nay, the salvation of one of us—depends upon our being permitted to meet once more."

"My son," replied the abbess, who, apathetic as she was, could not avoid feeling moved by

the vehemence of Leopold's manner, "it is not any more in my power to unite you than to increase the space which separates you. Pray calm your emotion, and arm yourself with Christian patience to endure those evils which must be the lot of all of us in this world."

"Is she here?" cried Leopold impatiently.

"My son, she is not," replied the abbess.

"But she has been here?"

"It is very true that she has been here, but she has departed hence."

"When did she go, and whither? Tell me, and the speed of the winds of Heaven shall not equal mine in pursuit of her."

"Again I say to you, be patient! Remember that sorrow and suffering are the lot of mortals, and that it is by them alone we can hope to enjoy that true happiness which is in Heaven."

Leopold would have rushed from the room without listening to any more of the old lady's exhortations, but the desire of learning whither Laura had gone restrained him.

"If you will moderate that transport, which even now shakes your every limb, and will promise to bear like a man that which man is born to suffer, I will tell you whither our dear sister is departed."

Leopold bowed. There was a solemnity in the manner of the old lady's last address to him which shocked him. He had thought that to

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from his cheeks
on the abbess.

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Leopold gasped,
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"Tell me, when did she die?" he asked, in a scarcely audible tone.

"Five days ago," replied the abbess; "and yesterday she was buried."

Leopold groaned deeply.

"I know," said the abbess, (who thought that if she could get him to listen she might be able to relieve him by diverting his thoughts,) "the whole history of your ill-fated attachment; and I pity you most heartily. But you are not yet aware that we believed you were dead."

Leopold made no answer, but by his gestures showed that he was attending to the abbess's discourse.

"Sister Laura," she continued, "loved you too well to be moved by the absurd reports which her father so readily believed; and she lived in the hope of being united to you, until the receipt of that fatal letter, by which she understood you were dead."

"What letter do you speak of?" asked Leopold.

"The letter which you wrote, and in which you said you should be no more at the time it would reach her hands. This it was that killed her; this destroyed the hope that sustained her; and she died, because, without you, the world had no joys for her."

"Show me that letter," cried Leopold with a faint effort.

The abbess did so immediately; and he recognised the letter which he had written on the morning of his duel, and which he had since sought in vain. He sunk back in despair. "The fiend triumphs!" he said; "it is in vain to contend further. The last blow is now struck."

After a few minutes he recovered again, and, fixing his lustreless eyes upon the abbess, he said, "Lead me, I implore you, to her grave."

The abbess, hoping that the sight of this melancholy spot might, by exciting his tears, assuage that mortal agony which racked his heart, complied with his request. She added some words of consolation, which fell as much unheeded upon the ear of Leopold as if he had already been laid in the grave he sought to visit.

The old priest and the porter supported him, for his own limbs almost refused their office; and, followed by the abbess and the nuns, all of whom wept at the piteous spectacle which Leopold exhibited, they proceeded towards the convent cemetery. Leopold never raised his head from the shoulder of the kind priest until they stopped.

"Here," said the father, "is the low grave in which lies she whom you loved, and who was the personification of beauty and virtue."

Leopold looked up. One glance was enough—the well-known spot, which nothing could have erased from his memory, was before him. The

ivy-covered wall—the tall cypresses—the white tablet, on which the moonbeams fell with a silvery lustre—the sparkling marble spires of the convent in the back ground—all convinced him at once that this was the cemetery of Santa Croce—that the spot on which he stood was that predestined to be his grave.

Once he looked round, as if to assure himself—once he gazed on the grave of his Laura, where the flowers strewed by her weeping companions lay yet unwithered—then turned his eyes to the dark blue sky, and, sinking again upon the shoulder of the priest without speaking a word, and uttering but one long sigh, his spirit fled for ever!

In that spot he was buried, and on that space in the wall was a tablet placed by his affectionate servant, Baptiste, with no other inscription than his master's name. So much of this story as relates to the woful termination of the lovers' lives is well remembered in the cloister to this day; and the younger devotees indulge that feeling of sympathy, which even their religious mortifications cannot entirely stifle, by strewing fresh flowers on the graves of Laura and Leopold.

"Well, now, Harry," said the captain, when the story was finished, "let me ask you whether you believe all that rigmarole which you have been telling us?"

"Believe it, sir!" replied Harry, affecting great surprise; "certainly I do; the gentleman who related it to me was a man of veracity."

"Why, as to that, you know, Harry," said my uncle, "one can never be sure of the companions one travels with. Fair outsides often cover foul

"Not a syllable, lad," replied the captain: "pretty work we should have of it if Davy Jones, or any of his crew, had power to come ashore like a press-gang, and carry fellows off just as they liked."

"Well, sir," replied Harry, "I am sorry that you criticise so severely a story which, I must say, seems to me at least as probable as that of your friend, Charley Russell."

"Egad you're right, Harry," replied the captain; "just as true, and not a bit more so."

"At least," said Mr. Evelyn, "if the question were to be decided by numbers, the majority would be in favour of the truth of such calls; for, among the various superstitions which have abounded at all times in the northern parts of Europe, none seems to have been more familiar and general than that which is the foundation of Mr. Beville's story—I mean the foreknowledge of the time and place at which death is to await certain individuals. In the highlands of Scotland this belief, which is prevalent, has been beautifully alluded to by Collins in his ode on the popular superstitions of that remote country:

'They, whose sight such dreary dreams engross,
With their own vision oft astonished droop,
When, o'er the watery strath or quaggy moss,
They see the gliding ghosts embodied troop;

Or if, in sports, or on the festive green,
Their destined glance some fated youth descry,
Who now, perhaps, in lusty vigour seen,
And rosy health, shall soon lamented die!'

"Not, however, to go so far for an illustration of this fact, I may add that I know the belief continues in England at this day."

"But," asked Elizabeth, "did you ever know any one who pretended to have the power of foretelling the death of others?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Evelyn, "an instance of it came under my own immediate observation."

"I should be much obliged to you, sir," said Elizabeth, "if you would tell me the particulars of that extraordinary circumstance; for it seems to me so unenviable a faculty, that its possessor would gladly be silent about it."

"If he had been wise or honest, he would," replied Mr. Evelyn; "but the man I allude to was neither the one nor the other. You know, of course, the common superstition relative to St. Mark's Eve."

"Yes," said Elizabeth; "it is that, immediately after midnight, the disembodied spirits of all the inhabitants of a parish, who are fated to die in the course of the ensuing year, will enter the churchyard gate, and walk into the church."

"Exactly so," replied Mr. Evelyn: "such is the belief in England; elsewhere it is supposed

that not only the ghosts of those fated to die are allowed to roam, but that all other unsubstantial beings are let loose on the earth;—to use again the words of Collins, that, in that thrice-hallowed Eve,

> 'Ghosts, as cottage maids believe,
> Their pebbled beds permitted leave;
> And goblins haunt, from fire or fen,
> Or mine or flood, the walks of men.'"

"But," said Elizabeth, "although I have heard of the belief, and know that it is entertained by cottage maids, who 'hold such strange tales devoutly true' only through fear and ignorance, I never yet met with any person who had actually undergone the ceremony of watching in the church porch during the midnight hours, when the grisly troop is said to roam."

"Then you see one now, for the first time," said Mr. Evelyn; "I have passed through that perilous adventure."

"Pray tell us, then, what you saw, and what it was that induced you to undergo such a frightful watch," said Elizabeth eagerly.

"Which question shall I answer you first?" asked Mr. Evelyn.

"Oh, just which you please," she replied; "but pray do tell me, for I wish of all things to know somebody who has really seen a ghost; and I am sure, Mr. Evelyn, that you will not invent any fables, as Harry would, only for the purpose of quizzing me."

"Indeed," said Harry, "you do me great wrong, Elizabeth; it is upon the veracity of my stories alone that I pique myself. Attack them in any other point if you will, but at least do me the justice to believe them."

"It is not worth while to dispute the veracity of your stories, Harry," said Elizabeth; "but let us listen to Mr. Evelyn's account of his adventures on St. Mark's Eve."

"They happened," said the clergyman, "many years ago. When I first took orders I went to serve a curacy belonging to a friend of mine, in a parish situated on a remote part of the coast of Norfolk. The village was about a mile from the sea, and the church stood half-way between them, in a bleak spot, which even in summer was dismal enough; but in winter it was so dreary that it might be deemed, with some reason, the haunt of beings that shun the cheerful and busy parts of the creation. The whole of the village, and a great portion of the surrounding lands, were the property of a gentleman, whose seat was immediately adjoining. This gentleman, as may be imagined, was interested in all the affairs of his tenants, and he endeavored to promote their comfort and happiness as far as he was able. He was a plain unaffected man, and a good sample of that class of the community to which he belonged—the English country gentlemen. I was treated by him with great cordiality and

kindness during my stay in his neighbourhood, and we had already begun to be very intimate, when he came to me one day for the purpose of consulting me, he said, on a subject which had given him some trouble.

"There was in the village a blacksmith, who, besides setting a very pernicious example of habitual drunkenness, pretended to possess the faculty of foretelling the deaths of his neighbours. This fellow was a great knave, and he had, in many instances, exercised his divinatory powers for the purposes of wantonness and revenge. He, however, carried on his practices with so much cunning, that the simple villagers feared him at least as much as they hated him. Some of his predictions had happened to be true, but they were always such as might have been very safely made without the possession of any supernatural skill. When young people had the visible marks of consumption, and when old ones were rapidly decaying, it was safe enough for the blacksmith to foretell that in the space of a year they would be no more. The rogue, who had wit enough to see that his neighbours were fit subjects for imposition, thought it would be as well to add a superstitious *eclat* to his predictions; and for this purpose he used to pass St. Mark's Eve alone, in the church porch, where, as he said, he beheld the unsubstantial forms of those who were doomed to die passing in

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"The object of his visit to me was to consult as to what should be done for the purpose of restoring tranquillity. To drive away the blacksmith was an easy matter, but this would not have been a sufficient remedy for the evil. It was the squire's wish that the people should be convinced of the rogue's impostures in the first place: he proposed to me, therefore, that I should pass the fatal eve in the church porch, and that I should publicly announce the result of my observations during the terrible hour to my parishioners.

"I had no objection to this—I did not believe in the superstition, and I was in hopes that my visit would have the effect of convincing the good folks of the village of the folly of their fears, and of the falsehood of the blacksmith's prophecies. The only precaution that I thought it necessary to take was that the author of the mischief might be watched, lest he should be induced to play me some trick which could have defeated the object of my vigil.

"St. Mark's Eve arrived: I supped with the squire, and remained chatting with him and his family until within half an hour of midnight, when I quitted them, and, wrapped up in a warm and capacious cloak, walked towards the church.

"The weather was mild for the season; the wind and rain had prevailed for several weeks, but the sun had occasionally, and for short inter-

vals, given promise of the approach of the tardy spring. The moon was up, and, sometimes shining in unobscured brilliancy—sometimes only shedding a dim and doubtful gleam through the fleecy clouds which coursed rapidly across the sky—gave a thousand different tones to the landscape. My road to the church lay, for the greatest part, through the squire's plantations, which were thickly grown; and, although now only at the end of April, the leaves of most of the trees were out. I have seen a more serene night, but I never saw any more beautiful. The plantation abounded with nightingales, some of which poured out the rich liquid melody of their songs, as if they would never end. I paused more than once upon my walk to listen to the profuse deluge of vocal sounds uttered by these birds upon the midnight air, which seemed charmed into stillness by the spell of their eloquent music. The quaint, but powerful and beautiful description, in a little poem called 'Music's Duel,' by an almost forgotten English poet,* came into my mind. This author has versified a story told by the Jesuit, Strada, of a musician, who, playing in a wood, found that a nightingale in a tree near him endeavored to imitate the modulations of the air he was performing. He increased the power of his song, and the bird its exertions to keep up with him, until its heart

* Crashaw.

broke with the effort, and this 'music's enthusiast' fell dead upon the artist's lute.

'Oh fit to have,
That liv'd so sweetly!—dead, so sweet a grave!'

"The passage to which I particularly allude is this:—

'Her supple breast thrills out
Sharp airs, and staggers in the warbling doubt
Of dallying sweetness, hovers o'er her skill,
And folds in waved notes with a trembling bill
The pliant series of her slippery song;
Then starts she suddenly into a throng
Of short thick sobs, whose thundering volleys float
In panting murmurs, 'stilled out of her breast,
That ever-bubbling spring, the sugared nest
Of her delicious soul, that there does lie,
Bathing in streams of liquid melody;
Music's best seed-plot, when, in ripened airs,
A golden-headed harvest fairly rears
His honey-dropping tops, ploughed by her breath,
Which there reciprocally laboureth.
In that sweet soil it seems a holy quire
Founded to th' name of great Apollo's lyre;
Whose silver roof rings with the sprightly notes
Of sweet-lipp'd angel-imps, that swill their throats
In cream of morning Helicon, and then
Prefer soft anthems to the ears of men,
To woo them from their beds, still murmuring
That men can sleep while they their matins sing.'

"But, to return to my adventures, from which the nightingales and Crashaw have diverted me—I went on to the churchyard, and took my seat in the porch of the ancient building, the appearance of which was at least as rude as the times

in which it was erected. The wind had freshened a little, and blew with a mourning noise from the sea across the flat high lands which lay between. It sung through the old church tower a wild and fitful song. The moon still remained high in the heavens; its beams fell on the silent graves, which were thickly strewed in the slanting churchyard at my feet; and the thin shadowy clouds flitting over the white grave-rails, which told the names of the lowly dead beneath, gave to them an appearance of animation.

"I could not help thinking that, with a very slight exertion, a person of imagination *might* people the whole of the silent scene before him with active beings, and create fictions out of

clock which stood in the church tower, and by the alternate wailing and sobbing of the keen night-wind. I began to wish that the hour of my watch had expired. The coldness of the air had chilled me, and I could not repress a slight shivering which occasionally ran through my nerves. I had now about ten minutes to stay, and began to pace quickly across the small porch, for the purpose of warming myself a little, when I heard the creaking of the churchyard gate. I turned immediately towards the place whence the sound proceeded, and, looking down, I saw in the clear moonlight a figure advancing up the churchyard path. At this moment I must confess that my fears got the better of my reason and of my resolution. The shivering increased with uncontrollable violence as I continued to gaze on the approaching object. By no natural accident which I could imagine was it possible that any person could be traversing that path at such an hour. It led only from the wild sea-shore to the village, and was so difficult of access from the cliffs, that even the smugglers, who sometimes frequented this neighbourhood, would have shunned it. These reflections flocked through my mind, and aided the impression which my fears had already made. I wrapped my cloak more closely about me, and with some effort stepped out of the porch, that I might see more distinctly the figure which had so

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"'A friend!' replied the figure, in a hoarse, but perfectly natural, voice.

"'What do you seek here, at this hour of the night?' I asked,

"'Before I answer you,' replied the unknown, 'let me know what right you have to question me?'

"'I am,' I said, 'the curate of this place.'

"'Then, sir, I must say you have chosen a cool night for the performance of your devotions; but, since you are the curate, I have no objection to answer your question:—My name, sir, is Benson; I am a lieutenant on board his Majesty's sloop, the Greyhound. My mother, whom you probably know, lives in the village yonder, and I am now on my way to surprise her with a visit, which, though it may break her night's rest, she will not complain of. My ship is making for the Downs; but the captain, knowing that my mother lived hereabouts, permitted me to be landed from one of the boats; and, as this wind has compelled us to keep pretty close to the shore all day, this was not so difficult to effect as it is sometimes.'

"For a few moments I could not answer, I was so wholly overcome with surprise. This was the very person for whom his mother was sorrowing in all the terrors of anxiety, and the fear of whose death was weighing his destined bride down to the grave. I was, however, soon able

to explain to the young officer the reasons of my watch, and the situation of his mother and his betrothed. With some difficulty I prevailed upon him not to present himself before them on that night; but I had still greater difficulty to restrain him from rushing to the blacksmith's cottage, and taking a summary revenge upon him.

"We proceeded to the house of the squire, whom we found still sitting up: his persuasions, added to mine, induced the young man to take a bed there, and to permit me to disclose the news of his arrival to his mother and his bride on the following morning. I will not attempt to describe the joy which this news occasioned. The lovely Mary, when her anxiety and terror

"Then, I must say, it is very provoking of you," said she: "twice have I been disappointed in my expectations of a ghost; I shall now, therefore, give up the hope, and look for nothing but plain matters of fact in future. Whose turn is it to go on, grandmamma?" she asked.

"Mr. Evelyn," said the old lady, "the turn falls upon you."

"I shall obey you with great readiness, madam," replied the clergyman; but, after the horrors of Mr. Beville's tale, I fear so homely a narration as that which I have to offer you may hardly be palatable."

"On the contrary," said Elizabeth, "it will be quite a relief to us to hear some sober true history after the *diablerie* with which Harry has regaled us, and the fright which you occasioned us with your adventure on St. Mark's Eve."

"I am glad, then, that, whatever may be the faults of my tale, I shall be able at last to comply with the terms which you impose upon me. Although it is a 'traveller's story,' it is, I am convinced, entirely authentic. The character of the person from whom I immediately received it would, if you knew as well as I do his worth and piety, satisfy you of its veracity. I have, besides, seen and conversed with the chief actors in it, and have received from their lips the confirmation of all the incidents I shall relate. I do not know that this may add to the value of the tale;

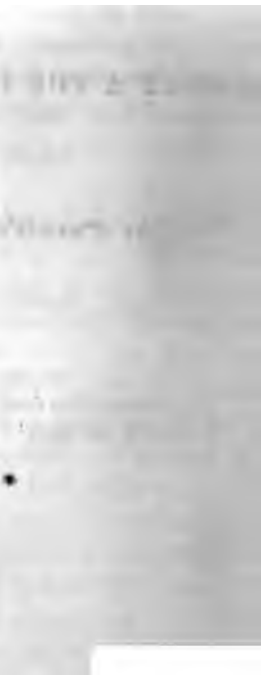
but, after so many fictions, I think it at least necessary to make this preliminary announcement, that my relation may lose nothing of the little interest which it possesses by being supposed to be a fiction, and that the partiality of my friends may not give me credit for an invention to which I have really no title. I will now, if you please, begin, premising only that it is a story which I picked up during an excursion I made through the valley of Chamounix, about three years ago."

LE MORT A TUÉ LES VIVANS.

The Curate's Tale.

——— "This shows you are above,
You Justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge!

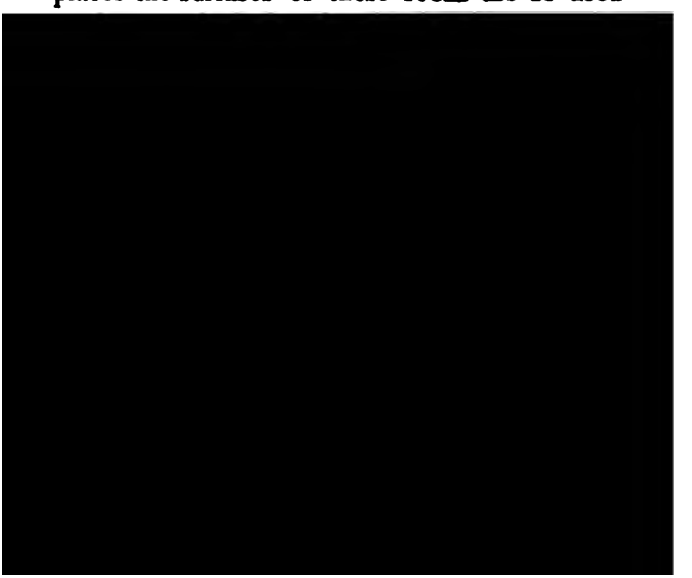
LEAR.



LE MORT A TUÉ LES VIVANS.

THE small valley of Magland lies between Cluse and St. Martin, on the road from Geneva to Chamounix. It is usually passed too rapidly to be well recollected, although, to my thinking, it is one of the most beautiful parts of the road. In the course of the delightful little tour, of which it forms a part, there are many things to be met with more striking, more sublime, and more wonderful; but there is no spot which so completely occupies the mind with a placid delight—a tranquil enjoyment—that charms rather by lulling than by exciting it. The valley is completely shut in; and, after having entered it by a very abrupt turn, it appears to the traveller that there is no possible egress. The roaring Arve pursues its turbulent course at the bottom of the vale, making a hoarse music among the granite rocks which lie in its

bed; meadows of most luxuriant pasture rear up their gentle slopes to the foot of the high mountains which rise on the opposite side of the river, and, with their robes of firs and larches, curtain, as it were, one side of the valley. On the other side, and at a considerable elevation above the bed of the river, is the road, thickly planted on one side with fruit-trees, which form a sort of natural *garde-fou*. A green esplanade, of only a few paces, lies on the left, between it and a pile of perpendicular rocks, which rear their heads to an elevation of from eight hundred to one thousand feet, and look like the giant bulwarks of a world beyond that which we inhabit. In some places the surfaces of these rocks are so accu-



or wooden cottages, have been built, and, seemingly suspended on the steep, they look like small rude bird-cages; for, at the distance from which they are usually regarded, it is impossible to suppose that any other means than wings would enable the inhabitants to reach their dwellings, and it is no less difficult to understand how they can descend. The rock seems to be perpendicular; and, although trees are seen to grow upon it, the spectator thinks that, unless one had the faculty of extending roots like a tree, it would be impossible to traverse the unpromising ascent: this, however, arises only from the distance at which they are beheld.

It does not usually fall within the purpose of the numerous travellers who journey through this valley to make *detours*, the object of which would be merely to see a rude *chalet*, or to converse with a people whose information is as bounded as the realm in which they vegetate. They are, perhaps, right; they are in search of wonders which would not be obtained by the contemplation of beings so simple as the Savoyard peasants of the valley of Magland. But there are others who journey no less for the purpose of seeing the people than the scenery of a country; and to them it is the source of a pure and delightful sensation to observe the manner in which those passions and conditions of sentiment which are common to humanity are mould-

ed by climate, education, national prejudice, and other circumstances purely local. Amongst this number do I rank myself. To me the contemplation of a family of hardy peasants, whose wishes have never been taught to stray beyond the confined limits of the spot of earth on which their destiny has placed them, but whose piety and purity of morals prove that they have found a road to heaven no less direct than those of a more presuming people, is a high delight.

The character of the inhabitants of this part of Savoy, and particularly of those who live remote from the public road, is of the most simple description. They are generally loyal, virtuous, and pious; and, although they are not exempt from the failings of humanity, yet their sins are commonly of a venial description, and the commission of atrocious crimes is almost unknown among them. I was, luckily, so fortunate as to procure frequent opportunities of observing their manners, and the result fully justifies my assertion.

I happened to sprain one of my ancles in crossing the river upon the granite stepping-stones which form the only bridge there; and this accident, for which I have to blame nothing but my own carelessness, obliged me to remain in a small cottage in the village of Magland for several days.

The Curé of the place very obligingly offered

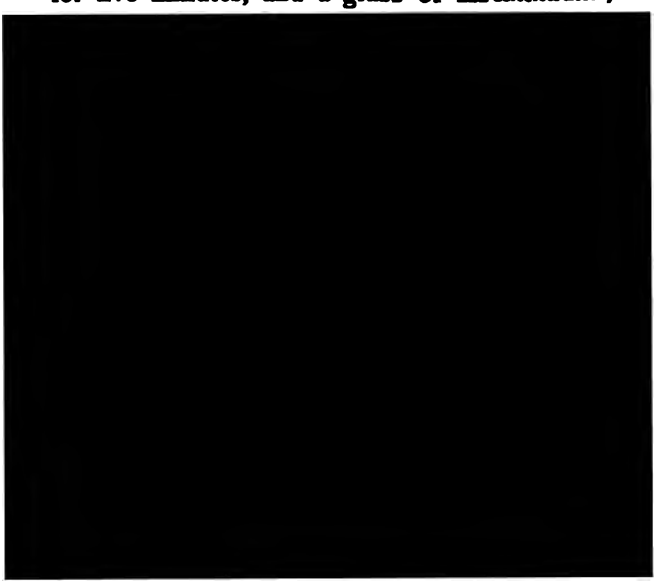
me all the assistance in his power, and, what was more useful, as well as more agreeable, his good company. He was a man of little learning, but of a warm heart, and loved the remote valley in which he dwelt better than all the world beside. He had numerous anecdotes of the place and its inhabitants to relate to me; and, when I had recovered so far as to be able to walk out, he obligingly accompanied me, and made all the objects of the neighbourhood infinitely more interesting by the little tales he had to tell connected with them. He one day proposed that we should take a walk up a path, from the summit of which we could view Mont Blanc, and the surrounding country, to great advantage: "It is called," said he, "*Le Mort a tué les Vivans;* but, as the exertion of climbing the mountain and telling a story are hardly compatible, I will reserve, until we reach the top, the relation of the circumstance which gave it so remarkable a name."

We accordingly set out on a path which led us from the road to the foot of the mountain, and thence tended upwards in a zig-zag direction. For a short distance it was tolerably smooth, but after a few turns it entered a thick plantation of firs; and now the only means of ascending was by climbing the fragments of the rock which lay between the trunks of the trees. After nearly an hour's walk the way enlarged again, and we found a piece of level road before us formed by

a break in the rock, the effect of some mighty convulsion, which had left a small shelf of less than three feet in width on the very face of the cliff. On one side was the mountain towering high above, and seeming to frown upon the presumptuous traveller; while on the other side was a flat precipitous descent, so deep that the eye aches, and the brain turns, but to glance upon it; while

> 'The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
> Show scare so gross as beetles.'

The inhabitants, however, pass along rapidly, fearlessly, and safely. If any foreigner should essay the pass, I recommend him to take breath for five minutes, and a glass of *Kirschenwasser*,



looking woman, of a countenance which had once been beautiful, approached us, bearing a child in her arms. The Curé introduced me as a stranger who was travelling to see the country. She welcomed me with a warmth and frankness common to this people; and, inviting us into her house, the table was immediately spread with bread, cheese, grapes, cream, and wine of a most excellent kind and delicious flavour. After praying us to partake of this repast, for which our walk up the mountain had admirably prepared us, she retired to attend to her domestic employments.

When we had satisfied our thirst and hunger I claimed M. Le Curé's promise to tell me the origin of the name of the path which had led us to this singular place; and he complied thus:—

"The chalet, under the roof of which we are now sitting, was built by Pierre Boisset, a peasant of the neighbouring valley. He was at that period about forty years of age, and bore the character of one of the most honest and good-tempered men of his district. He had been married early; but his wife had died, leaving him one son, who, after vexing his father with all the wickedness of a wayward boy, had quitted his home; and, no tidings having been heard of him for some years, it was supposed he was dead. Pierre, after living unmarried for a considerable time, was captivated by the charms of the youth-

ful daughter of a peasant of Balme; and, although his age was no recommendation to his suit, yet his reputation for a kind and manly disposition gave his pretensions the advantage over wooers of greater personal attractions; and, notwithstanding the disparity between eighteen and forty, he made the blooming Catharine his wife.

"Immediately before his marriage, having obtained a grant of the land upon which this dwelling is situated, he built it for the reception of his bride. After the performance of the nuptial ceremony he conveyed her hither; and here he dwelt in a state of tranquil happiness which is equally beyond the reach and the comprehension of the rich and proud. One daughter was the only fruit of this

little church, which I pointed out at the foot of the mountain, Marie was the most beautiful of the young peasants; and I believe that, notwithstanding all the common-place sayings about female envy, not one of them could have been found to dispute her title to that distinction.

"Her hand had been sought by Jacques, the son of the richest man in the commune: you may smile when I tell you that he was the Crœsus of the neighbourhood, because he possessed a comfortable chalet and half a score of cows. In point of wealth, Marie, too, was by no means a contemptible match: the heiress of old Pierre, who, although he had no cows, had an extensive stock of goats—and whose chalet, though not remarkable for the facility of its access, was sheltered and substantial—might, without any great advantages of person, have looked among the best of her neighbours for a husband. The attachment of the lovers was approved of by their parents, and they waited only for the arrival of the spring to consummate their happiness.

"During the winter, however, Pierre, who had enjoyed that uninterrupted health which is ever the consequence of temperance, happened, in descending the mountain, to slip and fracture one of his legs. This accident, though by no means so serious in itself as to have endangered his life, yet, owing to the difficulty of obtaining surgical assistance, soon put on alarming appear-

ances; and upon the arrival of the medical practitioner, three days afterwards, he pronounced his patient to be in considerable danger.

"My services," continued the good priest, "were then required; and I was summoned to administer those consolations which are most eagerly sought when human remedies appear to fail. Previous to my setting out I was surprised by a visit from a soldier in the uniform of the Austrian service. He was in a state of considerable intoxication; but he informed me, as intelligibly as he could, that he was the son of Pierre Boisset, and that, having obtained leave of absence from his regiment, he had come hither to see his father. I was grieved for the afflict-

"Upon my arrival at the chalet I had become tired and disgusted with my companion, and could not help entertaining a suspicion that his visit to his father had some interested motive. I found old Pierre in such a state as convinced me he had a very short time to live; and, having discharged the duties of my sacred calling by administering the last ceremonies of religion, I informed him of his son's arrival.

"The good old man, who was perfectly aware that his dissolution was about to take place, signified a wish that he should approach. He reached out his hands to give him his blessing, which the son received with an air of stupid insensibility.

"'In a sad hour are you returned, my son,' said the expiring parent; 'and yet it is a consolation to me to see you once more before I die. I trust that time and experience have eradicated those faults which were the cause of your misery and of mine; and while my last prayer is, that your death-bed, though far distant, may be as tranquil as mine, remember that integrity and piety alone can make you happy in this world, and in that to which I am hastening.'

"He sank upon his pillow as he finished speaking, and, his strength gradually declining, his eyes at length closed, and he died without the precise moment of his dissolution being perceived. His wife and daughter were overcome with their emotions, and remained kneeling by the bedside.

The soldier alone stood unmoved, and, muttering something about his having arrived only just in time, he coolly lighted his pipe at a lamp which hung in the room, and sat down amongst us.

" When the females were in some degree recovered, I intimated to the son that it would be better for him to retire. He grumbled, and seemed reluctant; but at length arose, and, without taking the slightest notice of his mother and sister in law, he walked out.

" After offering such consolation as was in my power to the widow and her daughter, and leaving them in the care of some humane neighbours, I prepared to return home. I soon overtook the son of the deceased Pierre, whom I found complaining of the difficulty of the descent inter-

with grief; and her daughter beside her, endeavoring to comfort her, looked like an angel. The saddened tone of her features, and the tears, which dimmed the brightness without diminishing the beauty of her eyes, rendered her still more engaging. They waited, as I understood, for the son, who had intimated his intention of bearing his father's coffin to the grave.

"At length he arrived, bringing with him a companion. This was a man who lived in the neighbouring town of Cluse, of notoriously bad character: every one shunned him, and, although their dealings sometimes led them into contact with him, it was with reluctance they spake together. He was a cheat and a liar; and generally believed to have some indirect methods of acquiring money. He had long previously proposed himself as a suitor to the fair Marie, but had been indignantly rejected.

"The son soon manifested symptons of drunkenness; and, looking round him with a rude stare, he at length went up to the widow, and, accosting her, said 'I am come to bury my father; but, before we set out, you must know that you cannot return to this chalet. It is mine; that is to say, it was; and I have sold it to my honest friend here,' pointing to his companion.

"The widow looked up, but seemed incapable of speaking. At length she said 'You will not,

surely, have the cruelty to turn me out of my house.'

"'*Your* house!' he replied with a sneer; 'I tell you it's *mine!* It was my father's: he died, and I am his heir. As to turning you out, that is not my affair; if you can persuade this gentleman,' pointing again to the man who *stood* beside him, 'to let you stay, I'm sure I have no objection.'

"At this moment I thought proper to interfere. 'Young man,' I said, 'I charge you, by the respect which you owe to the memory of him whose mortal remains lie before you, and whose spirit is at this moment witnessing your deeds, to forbear your wicked purpose. If you are entitled, as you say, and as I fear is true, to this house,

"The person to whom he alluded stepped forward as he spoke. He was about fifty years old; thin, with a hook nose and small eyes; and of a most forbidding aspect. The people in the neighbourhood said he was a Jew, and I believe they were right in their conjecture. He approached the distressed widow.

"'Madam,' said he, 'there is a very ready method by which you may retain possession of your dwelling: if the offer which I made to Marie, your fair daughter, and which I now repeat, shall be received with less scorn'——

"The gentle Marie, who, upon ordinary occasions, had seemed of so mild a temper that the slightest exertion was foreign to her nature, started from her seat, her eyes glancing with indignation.

"'Monster!' she cried, 'you shall find that the base and cruel plan you have laid shall be defeated. Not for worlds would I marry you; begging and starvation would be happiness compared to the disgrace of being united to a shameless and unmanly wretch, who has thus sought to increase the load of a widow's affliction in her most trying agony.' She flung her arms around her mother's neck. 'We may be poor and desolate, my dear mother; but we shall, at least, have the satisfaction of not deserving our misfortunes.'

"The hardened villain shrank back abashed at

the rebuke of the young mountaineer. The bystanders murmured, and proposed to put him out by force; but I checked them. 'My friends,' said I, 'do not let any violence on your part add to the outrage which has this day been offered to the dead. It is only for a time that the wicked appear to prosper; their own guilt shall one day bear them down, and bitterly shall they repent the daring impiety which they have now committed. In the mean time remember that they carry with them the contempt of every honest man; and, successful as they appear to be in their wicked designs, which of you would not rather be this houseless and bereaved widow and orphan than the men who stand before you?'

arm, and accompanied by those friends and neighbours who had assembled on the occasion, followed at some distance. It was in the middle of winter, and the difficulties of the road had increased by the lodgments of ice in various parts of the rocky path. The son, who was in the front, according to that practice which even the solemnity of the occasion could not make him lay aside, swore loudly and often as he descended. The worst part of the road had now been passed, and the procession had reached a turn in the rock, when the son, with a movement of levity, and because he thought all danger was over, took a long step: his foot slipped, and, falling upon his face, the coffin was loosened from the hold of the other bearers by the violence of the shock :—it fell upon his head, and the blow produced instant death !

" The impulse thus given to the coffin was so great that it turned over on one side, and continued to roll towards the intruder, who had preceded the company, and who had now gained a lower portion of the rock. He saw it coming, and earnestly, but vainly, tried to escape ; the coffin struck him on the legs, and he was hurled over into the deep abyss ! when the trunk of a pine-tree prevented the further descent of the corpse. A cry of surprise and horror burst from the following mourners. The body of the son was picked up totally lifeless ; but that of the

other man was not found until the next day—so mutilated and disfigured that it would have been impossible to have recognised it but by his dress.

"When the consternation caused by this event had in some measure subsided the coffin was recovered, and was borne without further accident to the churchyard, where it was quietly interred. There being now no persons to dispute the right of the widow and Marie to their chalet, they returned thither; and, having addressed the assembled villagers upon the fearfully mysterious event which had just happened, I retired to my own home to meditate upon the awful and righteous dispensations of Providence. The female

"I KNOW the spot to which your story relates," said Harry to the curate, as the latter finished his tale: "it is in a most romantic neighbourhood, and would, I dare say, well repay the trouble of any one who should go tale-hunting there; I would be sworn there is not a crag that has not its history. You remember the echo at the foot of the rocks which lead to the foot-path?"

"Perfectly," replied the curate; "I passed a whole morning there once in trying the various sounds which that echo gives back. It is one of the most distinct I ever heard."

"Then you must know the one-legged soldier who lives in a little hut there, and gains his subsistence by the bounty of the travellers who stop to listen to the echo," said Harry.

"He was my most intimate acquaintance," replied Mr. Evelyn, "during my stay there, and assisted me in the various experiments I made upon the reverberating powers of the rocks. He had lived for some years in the hovel you mention. With three small cannon placed on the green sward by the side of the road, he used

to exhibit, if I may venture to say so, the echo, and thus drew from the travellers, during the summer, enough to support himself in the winter. He had a great many stories to tell, of which his own was not the least remarkable."

"I am afraid," said Elizabeth, "it is too much to ask you to tell it us now; and you have made no slip by which we can insist upon a second story from you."

"I hope not," said Mr. Evelyn; "but at some future opportunity, perhaps, you shall hear the story of Blaise, the old soldier of the echo of Magland."

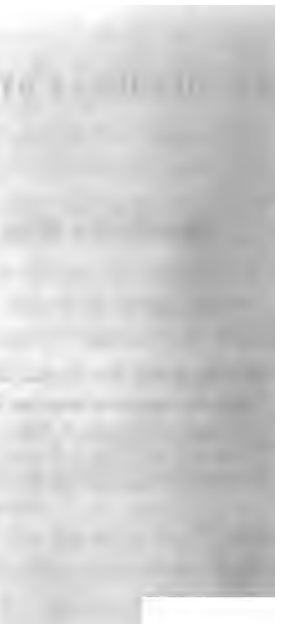
"And now, perhaps, Elizabeth," said Harry, "as you have failed in your attempt on Mr.

LADY ARABELLA STUART.

Elizabeth's Tale.

"To these, whom Death again did wed,
The grave's a second marriage bed;
For, though the hand of Fate could force
'Twixt soul and body a divorce,
It could not man and wife divide."

CRASHAW.



LADY ABABELLA STUART.

In the year 1610 there stood upon the brow of Highgate Hill a noble mansion, belonging to the Countess of Shrewsbury, of which not a vestige now remains. An avenue of tall trees led from the road to a large gate, beyond which were an extensive garden and pleasure-grounds. The house stood in the midst of them; and, although its situation was so high that it commanded a fine view of the city of London over the then thickly-wooded country which lay between, it was so completely sheltered by the plantations round about, that it possessed all the advantages of perfect retirement.

On an afternoon in the month of May, in the year which has been mentioned, two ladies were walking in the gardens of this mansion. One was a staid matronly-looking person, long past the middle age; the other was one in whose face

the marks of deep sorrow had not obliterated, and hardly impaired, the beauty which triumphed there, as in a throne. They were engaged in an earnest, and, as it seemed, a painful conversation. From their dress and demeanour it was evident that they were persons of the higher class of society.

A lame old man, who had been long gazing through the gate, and whose appearance indicated that poverty and old age had dealt hardly with him, now approached them. His tattered clothes were, as might be guessed through the numerous and party-coloured patches which covered them, the remnants of an old military uniform. A long and broad rapier hung at his side; and he leant

day for melting charity," instantly produced a purse, and, before her intention was perceived by her companion, had placed a portion of its contents in the beggar's morion.

"Where did you receive your wounds?" asked the young lady in a tone of kindness and sympathy which enhanced her bounty.

"In almost every place, gentle madam, where during the last thirty years the soldiers of Britain have had to maintain the liberties of their country. I lost my eye at Zutphen, but not before I saw that flower of chivalry, Sir Philip Sidney, lose his life. Afterwards I fell into the hands of the Spaniards, and lay in their prisons seven years: now, God help me! I am old, and unable to fight; my friends are all dead; and I have no dependence but on the bounty of Providence, and of such good Christians as you, lady."

"Poor man!" ejaculated the lady, "and have you no home?"

"The wide world is my home," said the soldier; "I shall never have any other until I creep into my grave."

"Who knows, friend," said the elder lady, "that you are not an arrant impostor?"

"Your ladyship's late brother, my honored master, would know it if he were alive," said the soldier, with an emphasis which amounted almost to a rebuke.

"Did you know the Lord Mountchensy?" asked the old lady, while a slight agitation passed over her face at the mention of her gallant brother.

"I knew him," replied the veteran, "for as brave a soul as ever struck hard blows in a fair cause; and by this token, my lady, he knew me also. This ring, which neither prison nor poverty has yet been able to tear from me, was given to me by the gallant lord after a hard fight in the Low Countries."

The soldier, as he spoke, gave the countess a ring; and, as the old lady wiped away the tears which her brother's memory forced into her eyes, he slipped, with great dexterity, a letter into the hands of the younger one, whispering at the same

the beggar, "to any one but your ladyship; and not to you unless you will take it from my hands as free a gift as it came to them."

"Well," said the old lady, "we must seek then for some way of thanking you that will neither hurt your pride nor weaken your remembrance of my poor brother." The countess then called a servant, and, bidding him take charge of the old soldier, she said she would see him again shortly. The old man retired, loading both the ladies with thanks and benedictions.

The younger lady proposed to return to the house; and, this being acceded to by the countess, she flew to her bed-chamber for the purpose of devouring the contents of the letter she had just received.

It is, perhaps, expedient, at this part of the narrative, that I should give my hearers some more particular information respecting this personage, who has no slight claims upon their interest. She was the Lady Arabella Stuart, the cousin of the reigning monarch, and, as some persons deemed, having a better title to the throne than James I. From her earliest years she had been an object of suspicion to the king. Upon her pretensions to the crown of England was founded the plot of Lord Cobham and Sir Walter Raleigh, which had been detected, and the inventors of which were put to death, banished, or ruined. Although she had no share in that

imperfect and ill-conducted attempt at a conspiracy, and was known besides to be of too gentle and amiable a disposition to harbour any ambitious notions, the narrow-minded monarch believed that her existence was full of peril to himself. With all the inclination to commit crimes, and to tolerate them in others when it suited his purpose, he could not yet screw up his resolution to attempt her life; but, as a middle course, in which, while he provided for his own security, he cared not what sacrifice he might make of the happiness of others, he resolved that she should never marry, and that her claims, such as they were, should terminate with her existence.

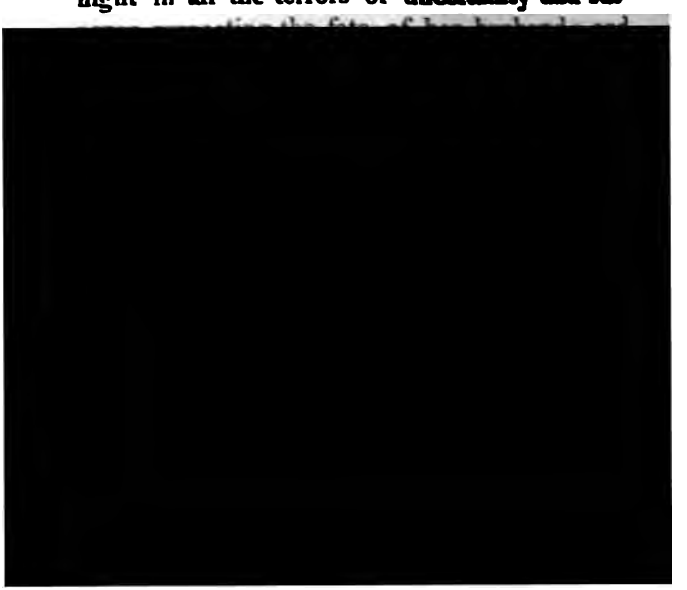
beyond as his reward, was to him only an additional incitement to pursue it. He loved the Lady Arabella; he imparted to her his passion, and had the happiness soon to find that he was a successful wooer. She confessed that she returned his love with equal ardour; and, although they were compelled to keep their mutual flame a secret, this scarcely abated the felicity of a sentiment which ever loves the shade, and is never made more delightful by becoming more notorious.

They were privately, and, as they hoped, secretly married; but the numerous spies whom the king kept in his pay soon discovered the union which they had not been able to prevent. The newly-wedded couple were arrested, and carried before the privy council, where, after an angry reprimand from the king, Mr. Seymour was committed to the Tower, there to remain during his majesty's pleasure; and the Lady Arabella was delivered over to the custody of her aunt, the Countess of Shrewsbury, with a strict injunction that she was not to be permitted to leave her ladyship's house at Highgate.

The imprisonment to which Mr. Seymour had been sentenced was at that time little less perilous than a sentence of death. Of many persons, some of high rank, and others, the humility of whose station precluded all inquiry respecting them, who had been committed to the Tower during the king's pleasure, few had ever

quitted it with life. Attempts at poison were so frequent, that the prisoners would seldom touch any food that was prepared within the walls, or, indeed, any that was not brought to them from careful and trusty friends. In short, although there have been many periods of English history, at which open and sanguinary outrages have been committed by the authority of the monarch upon his subjects, there never occurred one until the reign of James I. in which the most dark and treacherous crimes—such as are not usually held to be of English growth—were practised with the sanction and countenance of the crown.

Poor Lady Arabella had already passed a fortnight in all the terrors of uncertainty and sus-



the king's creatures, there was no unfair treatment that she might not have to dread; and the distance between Durham and her husband's prison seemed to her to preclude the possibility of their being again joined. She had been talking on this subject to the old countess, who, although affectionately attached to her kinswoman, was, besides, so loyal, and so fully impressed with the belief that because he was king he could do no wrong, that she gave Lady Arabella no other consolation than an exhortation to patience. The Lady Arabella saw that she had nothing to hope from the countess; and so fully convinced of this was she, that she abandoned the intention she had formed of beseeching the old lady to aid her escape to France, or elsewhere, where she might remain hidden until the king could be brought to confirm her marriage.

It was this conversation between the ladies that the old soldier's arrival had interrupted.

The word which he had whispered had been used as a signal between her husband and herself in all their secret interviews, and she therefore knew that the letter which had been put into her hand was from him. When she reached her chamber the force of her emotions almost took from her the power of action. She sunk into a chair, and the letter lay for some moments on the table before her ere she could summon resolution to break the seal. At length, overcoming,

by a violent effort, the sensations which almost paralysed her, she broke the seal, and learnt from the epistle intelligence which turned all her fears to joy—the intelligence that her husband had escaped from his imprisonment in the Tower.

She loved with all the intensity of a first passion, and it is the property of that sentiment to neutralize every selfish feeling. All remembrance of herself and of her own fate had been abandoned; but for that of her husband, and for the peril in which she, with too much reason, believed his life to be, she had been sick with apprehension. When she learnt that he was safe she threw down the letter, and, falling upon her knees, poured forth an incoherent rhapsody of

vessel which would carry them to France, where they might live in obscure, but happy, retirement. He recommended her to place implicit confidence in the bearer of the letter, who would furnish the means for her escape, and who, notwithstanding the meanness of his disguise, was a gentleman of good family, and Mr. Seymour's old comrade. His real appellation was Hugh Markham; and, although he had so successfully imitated the weakness of old age and the suffering of poverty, he was in fact neither old nor poor, but one who, to serve a friend in time of need, would have affronted the most terrific dangers.

He was one of those men who seem to be possessed with an innate love of wandering. Like all such persons, he was fond of enterprise; but it was only for the sake of the excitement which it afforded to his mental and physical energies. This had led him into fights and scrapes innumerable, and all those adventures which other men think misfortunes, but which were to him mere amusement. He was now about the age of eight-and-thirty. He had served in several campaigns abroad, as well under the English banners as under the foreign potentates; and, although he had always distinguished himself by his valour and conduct, he could never be induced, by offers of promotion, or by the honours which had been conferred on him, to attach himself for a length of time to any particular interest. He had, however,

never drawn his sword but in the cause of truth and liberty, so far as they could be discovered in the wars which then filled Europe; and, vagabond as he was, he was known to be as firm and as cautious, where those qualities were necessary for the success of the cause he had undertaken, as he was fickle and unsettled in moments of repose or idleness. The alacrity with which he had flown to Seymour's aid, as soon as he heard of his danger, had shown the fervour of his friendship, and he was luckily enabled to complete his good offices by lending him a vessel. This was a ship which Markham had manned with a few English sailors, and in which he had been cruising about the Mediterranean, solely for the amusement of encountering Turkish and Algerine ships, which he attacked and beat without mercy whenever he could.

With the ardour of a young and loving girl, the Lady Arabella thought, upon reading her husband's letter, that all the obstacles which stood in the way of her happiness were at once removed. Her busy imagination pictured rapidly and glowingly the bliss she should enjoy with her Seymour in some remote spot, where, forgetting, and forgotten by, the world, they should live only for themselves. To quit the court and all its splendours would never have cost her a great sacrifice; but, now that she loved, and that the opposition which she had met with had roused all the energies of her

pure mind, she could, without a moment's pause, have renounced all that the world contained for her love and for her lover. It, however, soon occurred to her that she had overlooked the difficulties which might attend her attempt to escape; and she then thought of the supposed old soldier, who was to aid and to accompany her. She had no secrets from her own servant, Bridget—a faithful girl, who had attended her from her childhood. The Countess of Salisbury was, luckily, shut up in her oratory; and Bridget was therefore enabled, with little difficulty, to introduce the soldier to a small ante-chamber adjoining the Lady Arabella's room.

The mendicant—or Markham, as he shall in future be called—advanced to the lady with an upright and quick gait, which little resembled the posture he had assumed in his character of a beggar.

"Fair lady," he said, "we have no time to spend in ceremony; every thing depends upon the promptness with which we arrange for your escape. To-morrow, as I learn, it will be too late to attempt it."

"Oh, let us go instantly," said Lady Arabella.

"If we could do so with safety, it were well," replied Markham; "but we must use a little caution. In this packet," he said, loosening his wallet from his shoulders, and throwing it on the ground, "I have a perfect disguise for you:

when you retire for the night, instead of going to bed, dress yourself, and be in readiness to set off as soon as the time shall serve."

"But where is my husband?" asked the lady.

"I do not know exactly the spot, but he will be waiting our arrival: he knows our ship; and, although he dare not stay long in any one place, he will join us in the river: perhaps, even now, he is on board."

"And you," said the Lady Arabella, "who are you? But the question is needless, for my husband says I may trust you."

"It is, nevertheless, fit that you should know, lady," said Markham; "and now I have before me as happy an opportunity of giving myself a good character as a man so much in need of one as I am could desire: but you shall have nothing save the truth. I am, madam, a very unlucky, but, as far as I know myself, a tolerably honest fellow, who have been in scrapes of one sort or another from the hour in which I was born to the present time. I have been a wild youngster; I have been a hard-fighting soldier; and, latterly, I have been a sailor. There is now lying in the river as pretty a pinnace, manned by a dozen of as honest fellows, as your ladyship would desire to look upon; in which I mean to carry you and your husband into the port of Calais. Will Seymour and I have been friends since we were boys; and, when I heard of his being made a prisoner

in the Tower, I hastened to London to rescue him. Happily I have succeeded in that, and, as his letter has told you, he is free. The next concern is to carry you out of the durance in which I find you. Hitherto all has gone on well, thanks to the credulity of the good countess, who believed a story which, if told by my poor father, had been near the truth, for it was to him that the Lord Mountchensy gave the ring. It would be unwise to prolong this conversation, lest any suspicions should arise which might be fatal to our plans. You must secure me a night's lodging, and leave the rest to our good stars and our own industry. Farewell, madam! keep up your courage, and show yourself in spirit, as you are in all womanly beauty, the worthy bride of the gallant Seymour." As he spoke he kissed the lady's hand with a courtly air, and, having made a low bow, he resumed the hobbling gait of the lame soldier, and crawled out of the room.

With the assistance of Bridget the Lady Arabella concealed the packet which Markham had left, and then went down stairs to join the countess.

She had no difficulty in persuading the old lady to order that her brother's ancient follower should be provided with a lodging. When the butler entered, and his lady made known her pleasure on this head, the old servant, with a familiarity which his age and his long services allowed, expressed his satisfaction at her determination.

"It would do your ladyship's heart good," said he, "to hear him tell the story of the battle of Zutphen. He has made all the servants in the hall laugh and cry by turns, ever since he has been there, with the sad and merry tales that he has been telling them."

"I am glad, good Ambrose," said her ladyship, "to hear they are amused."

"Yes, and if it please your ladyship, he is, for a soldier, as sensible a man as ever I saw. He says that your ladyship's ale is better than any in all Flanders; and I warrant me I was proud to hear one who has travelled say so much."

Ambrose's simplicity was always quite as amusing as his fidelity was praiseworthy; and the Lady Arabella, whose spirits were wonderfully raised by the news she had lately received, feared she should laugh outright at this description of Mr. Markham, who, it seemed, was playing his part to admiration in the servants' hall. She therefore dismissed Ambrose, who was not sorry to join his agreeable companion.

"I have been thinking, my love," said the countess to Lady Arabella, "of some means by which we may provide for this poor soldier. It is shocking to think that, at his time of life, he has not a place to put his head in."

"I think, my lady," said Bridget, "that he seems fond of a wandering life."

"Yes, child," said her ladyship; "but his age

and infirmities will prevent his indulging that inclination much longer. I think of giving him the rooms over the stable: he will be of little use; but he may find a corner in the kitchen where he will be protected from want; and, as he is already a favorite with the servants, there will be no difficulty about it."

"Well, my lady," said Bridget, "I think he is so much of a wanderer, that, if you were to give him a place to dwell in to-night, he would leave it before the morning." Bridget, as she said this, looked archly at her mistress, who sat on thorns lest the countess's suspicions should be awakened.

The good old lady, however, dreamt of no imposition, and went on to answer Bridget. "My good girl," she said, "if we let such doubts as you express stand in the way, we should never attempt to do a good office, lest it should be ungratefully received."

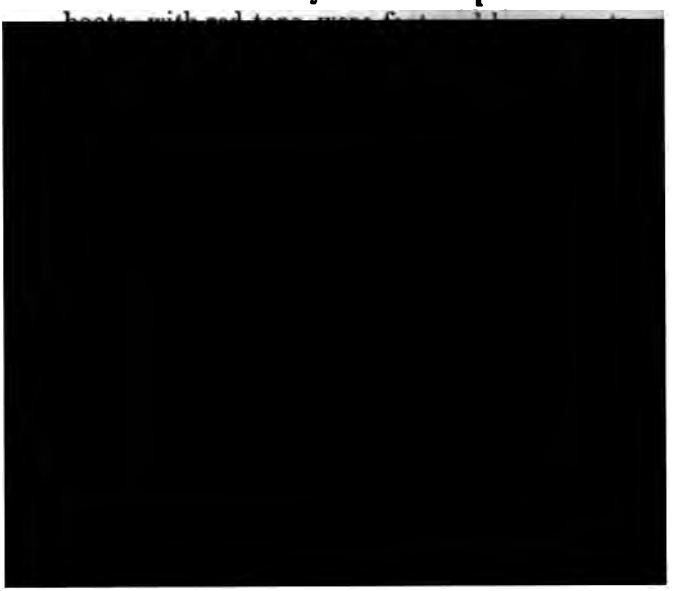
"And really," said Lady Arabella, "I have a much better opinion of the old soldier than Bridget seems to have adopted."

The conversation was then turned to another subject; and, night having arrived, the whole household retired to bed, the supposed soldier being lodged, to his great joy, in a sort of loft over the offices, and away from the house.

When the Lady Arabella got into her chamber, she put on, with the aid of Bridget, the clothes

which Mr. Markham had brought; and in a short time her disguise was so completely effected, that, as far as merely external appearance was concerned, it would have been impossible to see through it.

Her long auburn ringlets were gathered *up into* a knot, and obscured under a great French periwig, the locks of which hung down upon her shoulders. She put on a man's doublet, with a broad lace collar, and a pair of large trunk hose, made in what was then thought the *ultra* style of dandyism, but which were admirably adapted for a lady's disguise, because they could contain the whole of her ordinary dress. A pair of russet



brought, the Lady Arabella safely descended, having bidden farewell to Bridget, whose cheerfulness was not proof against parting with her beloved mistress.

The day had scarcely dawned, but there was quite light enough for the fugitives to discern the road they had to take. Markham, in silence, and with the greatest caution, led the trembling Lady Arabella across the lawn, and, lifting her upon the garden wall, he leaped over it himself, and helped her down on the other side.

"Now, courage, lady," he said, "and a brisk walk of a quarter of an hour will bring us to the spot where I have horses waiting. I dared not suffer them to be led any nearer, lest they might excite suspicion."

The lady felt weak and ill. She had not been to bed during the night, and the agitation of the preceding day had acted powerfully upon a frame not of the most robust description. She faltered, and, after several ineffectual efforts to proceed, was obliged to request Markham to stop. A few minutes' rest recovered her; and with the help of Markham, who almost carried her, they reached a small public house on the road to London, where he had a servant and horses.

The beasts were brought out immediately, and Lady Arabella's weakness was now so apparent, that it was with difficulty she could mount her

horse. The hostler, who held the stirrup for her, declared he thought the young gentleman would never be able to reach London; and he was cracking some jokes, rather more coarse than new, about the effeminacy of the young men of the age, when a smart stroke from Markham's riding-whip put a stop to his witticisms. The fellow rubbed his shoulders, but said nothing; for the noble which was tossed to him reconciled him to the disgrace, if there was any, and the pain, of which there was not much.

The travellers proceeded, and the motion of riding soon brought the blood into Lady Arabella's cheeks. Markham was not wanting in endeavours to keep up her spirits, and he succeeded so well that they reached Blackwall without any further delay. Here Markham found his boat's crew waiting for him; and, without staying a moment, they put off for his pinnace, which had sailed down the river. They reached her just below Gravesend, and the Lady Arabella found the solace and reward of all her pain and anxiety in the arms of her adoring husband, who was there waiting for her.

Their happiness at finding each other again, and in freedom, so engrossed their minds, that all apprehension of future danger was forgotten. Markham, whose generous temper made him keenly enjoy the happiness of those who were

dear to him, was perfectly delighted at the success of his plan, and at the joy which he saw painted in the faces of his friends.

He knew that they had every thing to fear from a pursuit, and therefore gave orders for sailing without a moment's delay. The wind, however, was slack, and not very favorable. They crept slowly down the river, and on the following morning only found themselves entering the Channel. It was resolved to sail for Calais, and Markham had laid his course for that port, which he hoped to make in a few hours, when one of the men gave notice that an armed pinnace was gaining upon them. Markham knew very well that, if they were taken, they should all be imprisoned. He feared that his friend might lose his head; and that he would be deprived, in any event, of his wife and his freedom, was quite certain. He therefore resolved to resist, in the best way he could, the attack; and to complete the escape, which he had hitherto managed so successfully, if it should be possible. He called Seymour upon deck; and the Lady Arabella, who apprehended some danger, came with him, resolved to brave every peril with her husband. The vessel in pursuit continued to gain upon them, and, being now within reach o their guns, a shot was fired as a signal to Markham to bring-to. He, however, stood on; and, having made every preparation for the engage-

ment, which he saw he could not avoid, he persuaded Lady Arabella to go below. She at length acceded to his and to her husband's entreaties. Several other shots were now fired from the pursuers' vessel, and returned by Markham's crew, who were always more willing to fight (no matter in what cause) than to fly, and who, under his command, were almost sure to have their desires in this respect gratified. Still the ships neared, and at length they lay almost alongside of each other. The commander of the other vessel called out to Markham, and bade him strike, and deliver up the Lady Arabella Stuart and Mr. Seymour, if they were in his ship. To this Mark-

from a pistol struck Seymour in the head, and he fell dead upon the deck. Markham, seeing his friend fall, collected, as it seemed, the whole of his force into one blow, and, rushing at the fellow by whom the pistol had been fired, he cleft him nearly asunder. This was the last act of his life; half a dozen weapons were plunged into his body at the same instant, and he fell beside his friend, their hearts' blood flowing in a mingled stream.

Just at this moment a shriek, so loud and full of woe that it arrested the frightful and maddening strife that was raging around, burst upon the ears of the combatants. It proceeded from the Lady Arabella, whose anxiety for her husband's life had prevented her from remaining below, and who had reached the deck only in time to see him fall. She rushed through the fighting crowd, who, astonished at her sudden appearance, made way for her, and threw herself upon Seymour's dead body, where nature, unable to endure the agony of that moment, sunk under it, and she fainted. All such assistance as the captain of the king's vessel could bestow was given with the utmost promptitude and humanity; for, although he was one of those men who would do whatever was prescribed to him in the shape of a duty, he was a well-disposed person, and felt bitterly for the sorrows of which he had been unwittingly the instrument.

The fall of Markham of course put an end to the fight. The captain took possession of the pinnace, and, steering, according to his instructions, for some obscure place, he landed at the Reculvers. The encroachments of the sea have nearly destroyed even the proof that this place once existed; but, at the time to which our history relates, it was a village inhabited by fishermen. He had the Lady Arabella, who still remained insensible, carried on shore; and, placing her under proper medical care, ordered her to be conveyed to London. He then fulfilled the remainder of his directions, in which the probability of Seymour's being killed rather than his surrender had been anticipated, by causing

reason had fled for ever. She lingered for some time in a state of pitiable distraction, and at length ended her life of woe, not without well-grounded suspicion that it had been shortened by poison.

The care which was taken to conceal all the facts of this sad history will account for the obscurity which has always enveloped it, and which perhaps, up to the present moment, has prevented the proper exposition of

"A tale so tender and so true."

[redacted]

It was now my turn, in obedience to the order of the lots, to tell a story. Of all difficult things, this was to me the most so. Although there are few people who can beat me at listening to a story, I am, I must needs confess, wholly incapable either of inventing one myself, or of relating those invented by others. I knew that these excuses, powerful and sufficient as they must be to all reasonable persons, would not be received

[redacted]

right to claim from me. I wished, however, to make the disappointment as palatable to them, and as little discreditable to myself, as, under the embarrassing circumstances which surrounded me, might be possible. In order to effect this I had but one measure to adopt: it was that of becoming a delator, or informer, against the good old lady, my grandmother, and, by procuring her to be condemned to tell another story, thus consume all the time that remained of the evening. If this could be effected I knew that I was safe, because, on the following day, I was to depart, and should thus evade altogether the conditions, which I regretted I could not fulfil. With a multitude of blushes, and much unfeigned shame, I confess that it was an exceedingly ungracious thing to do; but I beseech the readers who will be ready to censure me to pause for a moment, and that, before they give vent to their angry reproaches, they will fancy themselves in my situation; and then, if they cannot excuse and forgive me, I shall be sorry for them and for myself.

I knew that my grandmother had almost, if not wholly, translated her tale from a little French story of M. Löeve Weimars; and I also knew that her guests would be so glad to have a second story from her, that they would readily agree, without strictly examining the justice of the matter, that she had infringed upon the conditions to which

we had all agreed. She had always a store of tales ready, so that it could not be difficult for her to produce one upon the present occasion. My resolution being thus taken, I waited until the remarks which had been made upon Elizabeth's story were at an end.

When I was called upon to begin, I said that I was perfectly ready to obey, but that I felt it my duty first to submit to the company a scruple which existed in my mind, and without the removal of which I could not comfortably or conscientiously proceed.

"Let us hear his scruple, by all means," said Harry Beville with a sneer, by which he implied a doubt of my sincerity; and, as it is a case of con-

let us hear this mysterious secret which burdens your tender conscience."

"It is nothing more than this," I said: "my grandmother's story was unquestionably a very good one; but—I grieve while I speak this—it was a translation."

"Ha!" said Harry, with great solemnity, "a grave offence indeed! What says the culprit?"

"I do confess," replied my grandmother, "it is a translation; but then it is within the conditions to which we agreed."

"Nay," said Harry, "I have, as Mr. Prate, the special pleader, would say, a case in point. I was myself convicted, and suffered the punishment which my crime was supposed to deserve. You concurred in that sentence; and you, therefore, of all people, have the least right to object against the laws which you made and enforced. It is true I think the punishment was an unjust one; but for that very reason it is that I don't like to be the only victim to its severity. With all the veneration which I owe to you, and with all the pity I feel for your fate, I am compelled to say I think you must tell another story; and I forbear to add to your punishment by reminding you of the severity which you exercised towards me."

"But I will appeal," said my grandmother, "from so unrighteous a decision. Your case and mine were wholly different: you very lazily read

a story out of a book which is in print, and well known, at least to unprofitable students like yourself. I, on the contrary, have taken the pains to transcribe mine fairly—to make such alterations in the style and language as I thought expedient. To what extent those alterations have been improvements it does not become me to say; but I submit that they do entitle me to an exception from the severely literal construction of the law, which you, Harry, would have me to bow to."

"Then I call for judgment," said Harry; and he proceeded, with a gravity worthy of the subject, to collect the opinions of the persons present. They were all, as might be guessed, una-

all its faults and its merits (if merit it possesses), it is mine. Perhaps, however," she said, turning to me, "you will discover that for some of the descriptions I am indebted to the chronicles of the times to which my tale relates; wherefore, in order to take from you, and from critics like you, the merit of so ingenious a discovery, I publicly avow that, in the account of the tournaments and the combat, I have kept in view the narrations of the honest, valiant, and veracious Messire Olivier de la Marche, the faithful servant of the illustrious house of Burgundy."

The old lady then produced from her writing-desk a manuscript, and read the following tale.

THE KNIGHT AND THE DISOUR.

My Grandmother's second Tale.

Der verworrene Knäuel unsers Schicksals ist aufgelöst.

SCHILLER.

Erano in corte tutti i paladini,
Perchè la festa fusse più fornita:
Eran venuti i lontani e i vicini;

* * * *

E già vicino il giorno era nel quale
Si dovea la gran festa cominciare.

ORLANDO INNAMORATO.

THE KNIGHT AND THE DISOUR.

On the road-side, at about three leagues distant from the ancient and splendid city of Ghent, stood a small, but convenient, house of entertainment. A hieroglyphic painting over the door told to such of the beholders as could decipher it that the place was known by the sign of the "Leathern Bottle." Beneath this device were two lines, written in marvellously bad Flemish, to the following effect—

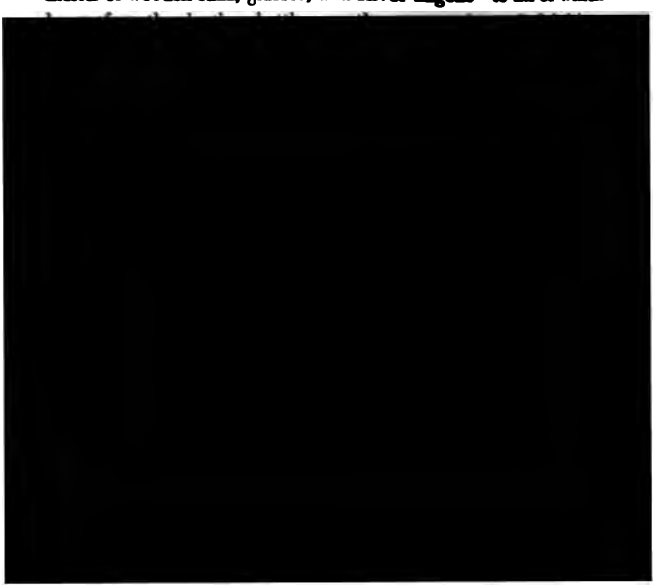
> "I wish in heaven his soul may dwell
> That first invented the leathern bottel;"

and on each side of the door was also inscribed a notification that travellers might be supplied with wine and beer, and their horses with hay and corn.*

* It was upon this inn that the famous ballad was written, which was afterwards translated, and became so popular in England. Beautiful as this lyrical effusion is, in all its parts, the fol-

The "Leathern Bottel" was the chief, because it was the only, inn in the village to which it belonged. The host, Peter Badelin, was a man whom Nature seemed to have made as a sample for all publicans. He drank eternally; morning, noon, and night, he was at his cups; and he might have used Boniface's speech—"I have *fed purely* upon ale; I have ate my ale, drank my ale, and I always sleep upon ale;" only substituting for ale, (which was not drunk in Flanders,) wine, and the beer of the country. Peter was not ashamed

lowing verse deserves most particularly to be rescued from the oblivion to which modern bad taste has consigned this favorite song of our forefathers. The poet, after examining the comparative merits of wooden cans, glasses, and silver flagons—to all of which



of his propensity to drink: he was wont to say, half praising and half apologizing for himself, "I live by the consumption of liquor; and I were an idle knave, indeed, not to set an example to my neighbours and customers, which they may follow to their own benefit and mine."

Next to his love of liquor, Peter insisted that loyalty was the predominant passion in his bosom. He had, he said, a devoted affection for Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, his sovereign and liege lord; and he had been proving this, on the day when my tale begins, by drinking the duke's health, in the best liquor that his house afforded, from morning to night. The extraordinary impulse which his loyalty and his thirst had just now received grew from the near approach of the great festival of the Toison d'Or, which was, on the following morning, and for several succeeding days, to be held in Ghent, with a solemnity and splendour never before witnessed. Peter knew that all the world would make holiday on that occasion; and he knew, too, that your holiday-makers are always a thirsty sort of folks: he therefore calculated, wisely enough, that a considerable quantity of such drink as he might find it difficult to get rid of at other times would now, under favour of the festival, be swallowed like so much nectar. For this it was that he drank the duke's health; for this he wished, at the beginning of many a long draught, that the order of the

Golden Fleece might extend its glories to the furthest corner of the world. He had too great a reverence for these toasts to drink them in any but his best wine;—the other, he said, would soon go off, and be liked quite as well by the rustics who were doomed to swallow it.

The night had closed in, and Peter, whose natural dulness even drunkenness could not much increase, was sitting in a large wooden chair by the fire-side in his kitchen, the only room of reception in his inn. He had driven a roaring trade all day long with the grooms and serving men, and waggoners, who were on their way to Ghent, and who, according to the good Catholic custom of such people, never passed a

propensity, sate on the opposite side of the fire, and reposed from the labours of the day, while she listened to a tale which was told by one of the two guests who alone remained of all the noisy and numerous company which had thronged the room half an hour before.

One of them was a mendicant friar. The other was a spare man, of the middle height, in whose appearance there was something at once singular and prepossessing. He wore a doublet and hose of dark cloth, which, although its texture was coarse, was carefully fashioned after the reigning mode. A large cloak, with sleeves of the same materials, but lined with crimson serge, and which he wore when he was out of doors, lay on the chair he sat in. A short broad dagger, or, as it was then called, a basilard, the hilt of which was of a more costly description than suited the other parts of his external appointments, was buckled at his waist. His face appeared to have been once handsome; but Time, who had been at work upon it for somewhat more than fifty years, had left several furrows and marks, that told too plainly of his progress. The guest's large black eyes, which sparkled and rolled about as he spoke, gave an expression of wildness to his countenance. His nose was long and pointed; and his chin, which was of the same character, was furnished with a small black curling beard. The fore part of his head was bald, and

the crisp curling hair which remained at the back of it was slightly grizzled.

Having described his person, it remains to say who he was. He was, then, by profession, a Disour, or Story-teller, in the exercise of which vocation he wandered about, visiting the halls and castles of the various noblemen of this and the adjoining country of France, and was every where a welcome guest.

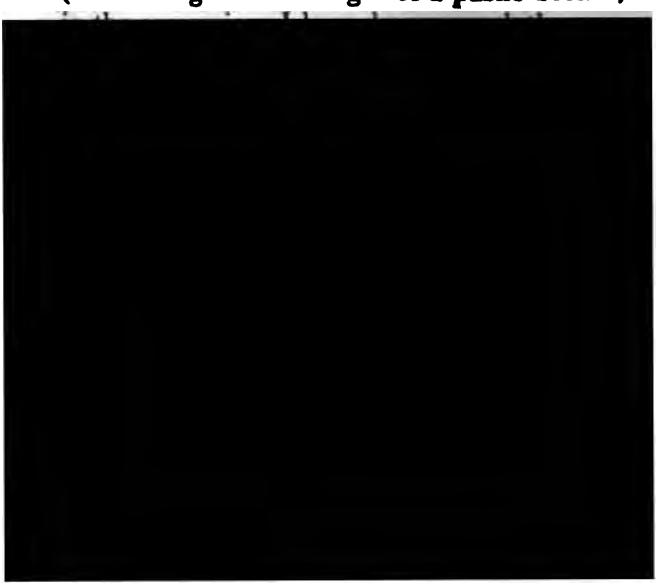
Before the revival of letters and the diffusion of learning such persons were frequently to be found, and were esteemed in proportion to the excellence and ingenuity of their stories. In all ages of the world its inhabitants have been fond of listening to tales : no one is proof against the charms of narrative ; and, besides the proof which we are now giving, in our own persons, that the taste for them is not lost, it may be recollected that, in the eastern and in all other nations where literary acquirements are even now rare, there are still to be found Disours, or men who gain their subsistence by telling tales for the amusement of others. To me, I must confess, it seems a more legitimate means of earning a living than twenty others which I could, but need not, mention ;—but perhaps I am partial.

In England, and in these times, the circulating libraries have taken the place of the professional story-tellers, and feed that appetite for novelties and curious adventures which still exists, and

probably will always continue. At the period of our history an accomplished Disour was in himself a circulating library, and supplied his customers with tales of every description, according either to their own particular choice, or selected by him with a view to the taste and capacity of his hearers, of which he was always the best judge.

He had one advantage, too, which the actual circulating libraries do not possess;—his novels were always to be had. None of his clients were reduced to exercise their patience or their good temper while some antiquated spinster, "with spectacles on nose," spelt slowly over every word of a story which they wished and waited to gallop through. His listeners, too, never met with that scarcely less afflicting trial, which we must all of us have undergone, on finding that the most interesting part of a tale had been torn out, perhaps by some sentimental lady's maid, who had relentlessly converted it into curl-papers; perhaps by some literate shoemaker, who had coolly lighted his pipe with it. They never were annoyed by the short but pungent criticisms, the sympathetic aspirations, the erudite annotations, with which the margins of a well-read circulating library novel are always filled. If the Disour's hearers did not like his tale—which, by the way, rarely happened, for

they were not critical—they at least never interrupted him in the middle of it with an exclamation of "Execrable stuff!" or the more cutting and personal remark of "The author is a fool!" While he was describing some interesting scene, in which a lover urged his passion to an obdurate mistress, although, perchance, some gentle swain, who might be struck with the resemblance of the fictitious woes to his own, would venture to sigh eloquently in his neighbouring fair one's ear, to tread upon her toes, or to practise some such allowable means for engaging her attention, he never would think of bawling out, *loud* enough to be heard through all the rooms in the house, (and writing in the margin of a public book is,



he knew, perhaps, all the stories that had ever been written, said, or sung, in the existing languages of the Continent. From the glorious and veracious histories of King Arthur and the Knights of his Round Table, down to the more recent productions of the great Boccaccio and his imitators, he was as familiar with all of them as a workman with his tools. He knew, too, all the best songs of the most famous Provençal troubadours, and the *Fabliaux*, and *Lais*, and *Contes*, of his own countrymen. He had himself a ready and neat invention, which enabled him occasionally to vary the incidents of his tales and poems, so as to suit the circumstances of his hearers or the place in which he happened to be; and this, with the agreeable manner of his relating them, made him a great and deserved favorite.

It would have been easy for him at any time to quit the wandering life he led, and to establish himself as a regular and welcome inmate of many a noble castle; but he prized his liberty too well to put on the chains of servitude, however brightly they might be gilded. He therefore travelled about, as free as the wind, whithersoever he listed; sometimes taking up his abode in a peasant's hut—sometimes in a prince's hall—sometimes in a little inn, like that in which he was now found—sometimes in a monastery—sometimes in the open air, with the bands of

wandering minstrels and jongleurs who roamed about the country. In all these places he was equally welcome, his wit and his good spirits never failing him;—freely dispensing, and sharing with any one who wanted it, the gold he got easily; and, when his purse was emptied, never caring a straw how it should be filled again.

Most people had a notion that he was crazy; and they were probably right, for his conduct seemed to be governed by no settled principle except that of pursuing his own amusement, and, by the way, contributing, with the full extent of his power, to that of others. He was, however, no more mad than all those men to whom their genius seems to have assigned one place while

dwell; and, although this reflection sometimes gave him pain, and produced a certain waywardness in his conduct, it did not make him wretched. There was still one region, of which he felt not merely a citizen, but in which he might reign a sovereign—the world of his own imagination. In this he sought and found his greatest happiness. For the rest, he flitted through his existence like a summer butterfly, alighting wherever his fancy directed him; and, whether it happened to be on weed or on flower, carrying his own means of enjoyment along with him.

At the request of the good old lady he had been telling her a story. She stipulated for a tale of chivalry, and he selected for her one—perhaps the only one which even his extensive stories contained—in which, at the same time that it related to one of the chief flowers of knighthood, there was a dash of comicality well suited to what he rightly guessed must be her taste in such matters.

He related the early part of the romance of the valiant Perceval de Galles, one of the Knights of the Round Table, and the achiever of the perilous adventures of the Saint Greal. The whole of the romance would have been far too long for the occasion; and the latter parts of it, as they relate wholly to affairs of chivalry, would not, perhaps, have been so amusing to the old woman as that which the Disour selected for her.

"The *Roman de Perceval,*" said my grandmother, looking up from the manuscript which she had been reading, "has shared the fate of almost all its contemporaries, and has fallen into total oblivion, its very existence being known only to persons who are a little infected with the antiquarian mania, of which number *I* must confess myself to be one. It is among the most rare of all the chivalrous romances: I believe there is not a copy of it extant in England, although there are some metrical versions of parts of it in private libraries; but these, as far as I know them, are vastly inferior to the quaint prose original. The copy which I have read is in the *Bibliotheque du Roi*, at Paris, with many other

and he leaves his home to go to the court of King Arthur, where he claims to be knighted. The bluntness and rusticity of his manners are very whimsically described; and the contrast which they present to the nobility and valour of his mind, and to the customs of the courtiers, gives a charm to the relation which none of the other romances possess. It gives also a very curious picture of the state of society in the palaces of kings at that day. I might here introduce a translation of some of the extracts which I made from the very rare copy of the romance which, as I have told you, I saw at Paris, but that I am resolved not again to incur the charge of having infringed the supposed conditions of our sport. Begging pardon, then, for this digression, I resume."

When the Disour had finished his tale the old woman thanked him over and over again, and set about expressing her gratitude in a very substantial manner, by preparing a bowl of mortified clary for the purpose of moistening the story-teller's throat after his exertion.

The host, who had slept soundly during the latter part of the tale, waked as soon as the lulling sound of the words had ceased, and, shaking his ears, he swore roundly that it was the best tale he had ever heard.

"A tale!" cried the Disour; "it was no tale, man—it was a song."

"Nay, by my holidame," said the host, "it was a tale; and, if I would, I could tell thee all that it was about."

"And I tell thee, Master Peter, 'twas a song," rejoined the Disour; "and a main good song too, by the mass! An' thou hadst said 'twas as good a song as thou ever snoredst a bass to, I had believed thee."

"Thou art waggish, my merry master," replied the host; and, as his dame was at the same moment handing to the Disour the bowl of spiced wine which she had been so carefully brewing, he adroitly intercepted it. "But, tale or song," he continued, "here's to thee for the best hand at both that ever was born;" and as he spoke he took a draught, which, if the earnestness of his good wishes might be estimated by the quantity of his potation, proved that he meant nothing less than what he said.

"I do verily think, thou spongy host," said the Disour, "that, if thou hadst been stone dead a whole week, the clinking of a pottle pot in thine ear would restore thee to life: nay, the drawing an old cork would be to thee like the archangel's trump. Why, thou art not awake now; thou art drinking in thy sleep, and the claret is thrown away upon thee. I owe thee no ill will, Peter," he said, as he took the bowl; "but, if I did, I would drink to thy eternal sobriety; and I am sure that nothing worse than that could befall thee."

"No matter," said the host, willing enough to change the subject, "I say those days of chivalry were famous ones to live in. Marry, I should like to see the time come round again when a man might ride his horse into a king's banquetting hall, help himself to his dinner without even the trouble of dismounting, and then ride off again in quest of adventures."

"But they must have been parlous bad times for innkeepers like you, Peter," said the Disour, "since, for aught I can learn, the knights'-errant drank little wine, and even that little they never paid for. By St. Paul, if a host claimed his reckoning of them, he was like to get more buffets than besants."

"Do you think, then, Master Disour," said the host, affecting indignation, "that I have so little heart in my belly as to wish to be an innkeeper when all besides were knights? No, marry, I would ride and fight, and foin, like Sir Perceval himself."

"Thou must starve first, and reduce thyself until thy girdle would go thrice round that tun of thine. But hast thou no fear of death, and of the fate worse than death, which befell some of the knights you so much admire? Wouldst thou not be horribly afeard of being swallowed alive by a dragon, the inside of whose stomach was full of fire and brimstone, like the flaming mountain at Naples? How couldst thou endure

to be taken by some fell giant, and hung up for four-and-twenty years by the hair of thy head, in a dungeon under ground, with nothing to eat or to drink during all that time?"

"Oh," said the host, "but your real pious knights fall into no such mischances: they always conquer the dragons, and cut off the giant's head—or heads, if he happens to have more than one."

"Then thou wouldst like only the sunny side of knight-errantry, my good host," replied the Disour. "By my faith thou art in the right, for the other would be all too cold for thee. But wail not, honest Toss-pot! the days of chivalry are not all gone. There be many good knights now in

which all the chivalry of his dominions, and many a bold warrior from beyond their bounds, will hasten. There will be prizes to fight for, which nothing but sheer manhood and knightly craft can win."

"And the prizes shall be buts of malvoisie or hogsheads of claret, as I reckon," said the host.

"Thou addled brain of a tapster!" said the Disour, with some indignation; "thou dreaming drunkard, who thinkest of nothing but toping! the prizes will be no such trash; but favours from fair ladies, and honour among knights. Would that one I wot of were here to join in the press!"

"And who is he?" asked the friar, who had sate silent during the whole of this conversation.

The monk was of the order of barefooted Carmelites, and had the reputation of keeping his vows with much greatet strictness than many of his brethren. The hostess had a great opinion of his piety; and it was, in fact, to receive her confession that he had, on this occasion, come to the Leathern Bottle. He had been sitting by the fire absorbed in his contemplations, and apparently not listening either to the tale, or to the dialogue between the Disour and the host which succeeded it. His cowl was thrown back from his head, and displayed a set of mild benevolent features, in which therewere marks of gravity,

and even sadness, that might be guessed to have proceeded from woes which religion had calmed, but which no other power than death could erase.

The Disour, who knew him from having often met him in places to which the wandering habits of both had led them, turned to him, and answered his question by saying "I mean young Gui de Montaudun, good Father Philip—the Bastard de Montaudun, as he was commonly called."

"You mean the son of Ralph, the Baron of Montaudun, who died on the same day with the father of the present duke, and who gave up his last breath in my arms."

apprizing her relatives of the step she had taken, as she was not willing that they should first learn it from general rumour."

"How so, then?" asked the Disour: "if that be true, he is heir to the broad barony of Montaudun."

"He is as truly the heir of his father," said the friar, "as you are of yours."

"Then nothing can be more legitimate than that, for all the world knows that my father was an honest tailor of Alez, and married seven years before I was born to my good mother, who was a damsel of the same town. Heaven rest their souls! But my heirship stood me in little stead; for, excepting the *green baye* which some of my partial friends have assigned to me, I inherit nothing of my father's.* The late Baron Philip de Montaudun was supposed to die without any legitimate child, and the Bishop of Valenciennes took possession of his fair domain by virtue of his rank, as liege lord of the province, and for lack of heirs to the Baron. How do you reconcile this with what you have just told me?"

"This, my son," said the friar," is not the time, nor is the place fitting, for such explanations."

"By the mass you say wisely!" replied the

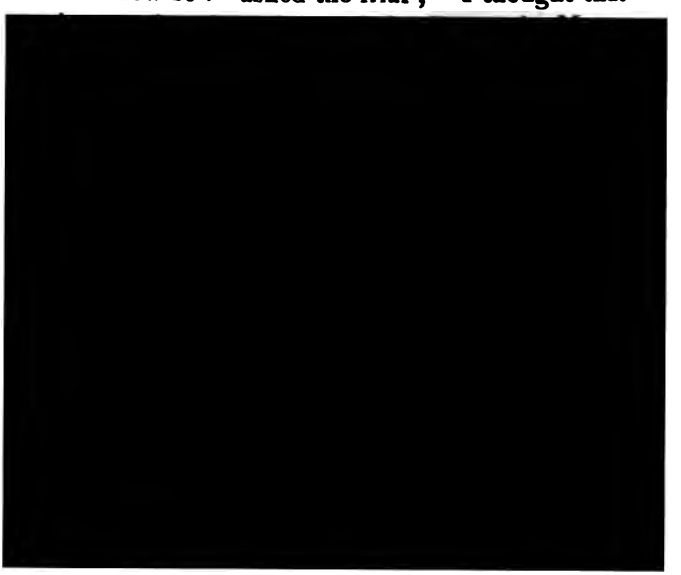
* In the early part of the fifteenth century (long before the birth of Mr. Joseph Miller) this was a newer joke than it may now seem to be.—PRINTER'S DEVIL.

Disour; "but remember, holy father, if young Gui should ever come home again, I shall think you bound to make good your present assertions."

"What must be shall be," replied the friar gravely; "but, tell me, where is the youth now?"

"I had rather than a hundred nobles that I were able to tell you," replied the Disour. "I fear he is no longer among the living. The poor youth went to the wars against the Saracens, and, if he did not fall on the field at Varna, as is generally supposed, he is rotting in some dungeon. Alas! his fate has indeed been a melancholy one."

"How so?" asked the friar; "I thought that



sent sovereign prince. He was with him when he received the treacherous invitation to meet the then Dauphin, now the King of France, at the bridge of Montereau. The pretence of the meeting was, that all the causes of difference might be arranged and removed, and that peace might be restored to both countries, which had already suffered enough under the evils of war. The Baron de Montaudun exerted all his influence to persuade Duke John to accept the invitation, because he knew full well that it was just then highly important for him to gain breathing-time before he pursued his enterprises any further. The duke was willing enough to meet the Dauphin; but he would go, in spite of the advice of his friends, accompanied only by a few noblemen of his court, his gallant spirit prompting him to scorn the precautions which prudence suggested. On this point the Baron de Montaudun found he could not prevail, and he set out with his sovereign, without any of the troops which commonly formed his guard. They crossed the bridge of Montereau, and rode frankly into the quarters of the Dauphin, who received them with every demonstration of kindness, and expressed his delight that the duke had shown himself thus willing to put an end to the existing contest. After a short conversation, the greater part of which consisted of compliments on the part of the Dauphin and his courtiers—

for the good duke was not much given to flatteries of any kind—he was reminded that, as the Dauphin represented the King of France, it was the duty of the duke, who held several important places as fiefs of the French crown, to pay his homage to him as his liege lord. Our noble duke, fearing no treachery, and always as willing to do what the laws of honour and the country required of him as he was resolute in maintaining his own and his people's rights, knelt without hesitation at the feet of the Dauphin's chair, and offered him his homage. At this moment, to the eternal disgrace of the Dauphin, now the King of France, a deed was done, the baseness and cruelty of which will for ever stain his escutcheon, even if it were a thousand times fairer than

the great and gallant Duke John of Burgundy! but, if the spirits of the departed can joy in the vengeance which is wreaked after their decease upon their assassins, his ghost, and those of the warriors who fell with him, have been amply regaled. The present duke, at the time of his father's death, was only three-and-twenty years of age. He immediately reassembled the troops, who had dispersed on receiving the fatal news; and, having collected a sufficient armament, he began that bloody war, as successful and advantageous on his part as it was fatal and disastrous to the French, which the peace of Arras has just put an end to;—a war in which he forced the murderer of his father to make the most abject submission, and to offer him the most solemn assurances—would they were true!—that he neither authorized nor consented to the late duke's death; but that it was perpetrated against his will, although in his presence, by men who were the sworn foes of the duke, and who were too powerful for the arm of Justice, shackled as it then was in France, to reach."

"You tell the tale truly," observed the friar: "I was present in the fatal hall at Montereau—not at the moment when the foul deed was done, but almost immediately afterwards. The poor duke died instantly, so numerous and so fatal were the wounds which were showered upon him; but the baron lived for nearly half an hour longer.

By the mercy of some of his murderers a priest was sought for, at the request of the dying man; and, as I happened to be at hand, I hastened to his aid. I shall never forget the lamentable sight which presented itself as I entered the hall. The Dauphin and his treacherous followers had withdrawn, and left the bodies of their victims to such care as the serving men chose to pay them. The duke's corpse had been covered by some charitable hand with a large cloak, and was stretched upon the steps of the dais, where the Dauphin had been sitting to receive him. The others, with the exception of the Baron de Montaudun, lay just as they had been killed, in the very spots where the weapons of their foes had reached them, while the floor of the hall was slippery with their yet warm blood. An old man, a servant of the castle, and the Dauphin's jester, a half-witted fool, who had more pity in his heart than sense in his crazy brain, were holding up the dying warrior's head. I approached him;—he knew me well; and, having received his confession, made in great haste, but with full and pious sincerity, I administered to him the last sacrament of our holy religion, soon after which he gave up the ghost."

"And is it upon this confession, my good father," asked the Disour, "that you found your belief of the young Gui's being the true heir, as he is the true son, of the Baron de Montaudun?"

"Call it not belief, my son," replied the friar;

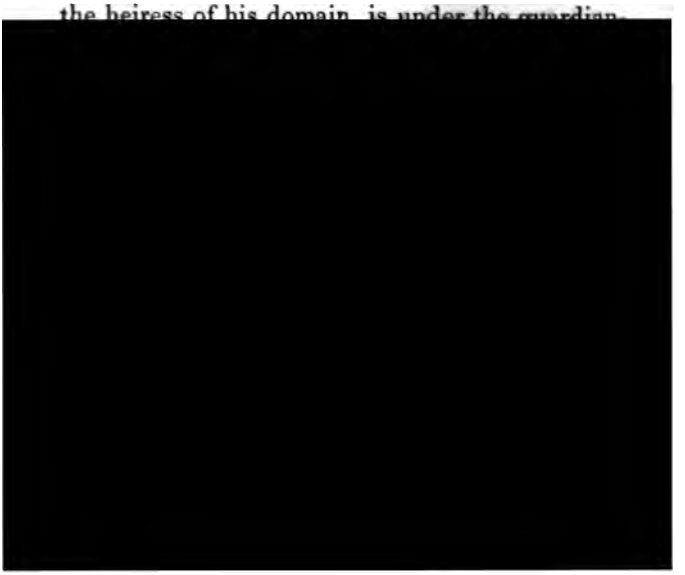
"I know, and in fitting season I will make known, the truth of what I have now said. The Bastard, as he is now called, is the true Baron de Montaudun."

"You read brave riddles, holy father," said the Disour; "and, but that jesting suits not your character nor your calling, I should fear you were putting some trick upon us. If what you say be sooth, I am glad to hear it, for the old baron was my best friend and earliest patron, and the youth I loved as well as if he were my own child. But, alas! I fear, even if the golden dream you tell of were to be realized, it would avail him little, for the common report is that he died on the bloody plain of Varna."

"I have heard that one of the few knights who escaped from that slaughter says he saw him made prisoner; and that the Bastard of Burgundy, who loves him well, has sent to negotiate his ransom with the Turk."

"God speed him," ejaculated the Disour, "and send the young knight safely home again! although I hardly dare hope for such good fortune. But prithee, holy father," he added, after a pause, "how does it happen that this news which you now tell me has remained so long locked up in your breast? You must know full well that, when the Baron de Montaudun died, the Bishop of Valenciennes took possession of his lands for the use of the church, for want of lawful heir,

and that the broad barony remains in his hands, and its rents in his coffers, to this day. The infant Bastard, as he was universally believed to be, was taken by the Baron de Montacute, and educated with as much care as if he had been a king's son. He became skilled in all knightly accomplishments; and at the age of eighteen, now seven years ago, he had won his spurs. He saved the life of the Lord Anthony, under circumstances of the greatest peril, in the field where he was knighted. Even if he should have escaped from the butchering Turks, and come safely home again, he will have dismal news to greet him. The baron has been dead now nearly twelve months: the young Lady Maud, his only daughter, and the heiress of his domain, is under the guardian-



thus the friar rose, and prepared to continue his journey.

The hostess besought him not to proceed at so late an hour; but her persuasions were fruitless. The monk bestowed his benedictions on the inmates of the "Leathern Bottle," and, drawing his cowl over his face, he took the road towards Ghent.

As it was now nearly approaching midnight the Disour proposed to retire to rest. He was conducted to his chamber; and the sleepy host, rousing himself, fastened his doors, and then went to bed to finish the slumbers which this necessary operation had for a short time interrupted.

The Disour found it difficult to get to sleep. The mysterious discourse of the friar still occupied his thoughts; and, the more he reflected on it, the more he blamed himself for not having pressed him more closely to discover the reasons which induced him to assert that Gui de Montaudun was the lawful heir of the late baron. He felt warmly attached to the youth; and, although he could not help fearing too much that he had fallen in battle, yet, as it was possible that he might be saved, he carefully encouraged the hope that he should again see him. After pondering upon the means of securing the friar's secret, so as to effect the restoration of Sir Gui to the barony of Montaudun, if it might be pos-

sible, he resolved to hasten betimes in the morning to Ghent, where he knew he should find the Lord Anthony, a natural son and great favorite of the Duke of Burgundy, and who was Sir Gui's friend and patron, and, by the interposition of his authority, to persuade the friar to impart all that he knew on the subject. Having come to this determination he soon fell asleep.

At an early hour on the following morning he arose, and, quitting the "Leathern Bottle," he hastened to Ghent as fast as an ambling pad of the host's could carry him. As soon as he arrived he went straight to the quarters of the Bastard, in pursuance of his design. While he was inquiring of the porter when his master

who comes to look for Anthony of Burgundy in his hall when there be warriors in harness," replied Gilbert.

"Leave thy riddles, good Drain-can, and tell me where is the gallant Bastard, for, in sooth, I would fain see and speak with him," said the Disour.

"See him!" replied Gilbert; "thou shalt, as indeed every man, woman, and child, who has eyes in Ghent, shall; but, for speaking with him, that is another guess matter: marry, he will bestow more strokes than words on all who shall come in his way till the tournay is over. Let thy gallant steed (which pray Heaven thou didst not steal from some wandering tribe of Bohemians!) be stabled, and come with me into the buttery, where thou shalt break thy fast, and then I will bestow thee in a place where thou canst see the brave sights of the joust."

The Disour followed Gervase to the buttery, which he found filled with some of the upper retainers of the Lord Anthony, to all of whom he was known, and who received him with a joyful acclamation.

"Save ye, my merry masters!" said he, taking off his cap, and making a low reverence to the jocund serving-men; "still I see you keeping up the good old custom of beginning the day with a well-stored stomach. Marry, ye are right wise; for the uncertainty of affairs in this world is

such that no man can be sure of his dinner, and therefore he does well to lay in a breakfast which shall enable him to defy fate. We are all born, but we know not when we shall die; the breakfast is before us, but our dinner may be postponed until the day of doom."

"Here's to stop thy mouth, old friend," said one of the fellows, handing him a plate bending under the weighty portion of venison pasty which he had heaped upon it.

"Gramercy!" said the Disour, as he took his seat, and fell to with an appetite which did honour to his entertainment. Several flasks of excellent Rhenish washed down the repast; and, the gentlemen of the buttery having finished,

Toison, that all the valorous nobles and knights whom he should associate to himself in that expedition might bear an honorable distinction, and be knit together in a chivalrous fellowship for the pursuit of their common object. The holy Saint Andrew was chosen to be the patron of the order. There can be no knights of the Toison who are knights of any other order, excepting only emperors, kings, or sovereign dukes. You all know that the habit of the knights is an under garment of crimson velvet, with a cloak of the same material, lined with white silk, turned up on the left shoulder, and richly embroidered round about with a border of flames, fusils, and fleeces. They wear also on their heads a hood of crimson velvet instead of a cap. The collar of the order is wrought of golden flames or fusils, with the toison hanging thereat. This toison is a counterfeit resemblance of the golden fleece of antiquity, which was achieved by a worthy knight, called Jason, and his companions; or, as some churchmen the rather expound it, the fleece of Gideon, mentioned in holy writ, which signifies 'Fidelity, or Justice uncorrupted.' This collar, or the toison, every knight is bound to wear daily, or, failing, shall incur a penalty; but if, by mishap, the collar do break, it is permitted, for the mending thereof, that it may be carried to a goldsmith; or, if any knight travelling by the way shall fear to be robbed, he

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aside. Yet it is not lawful to
city of the collar, nor add there-
or workmanship; and most un-
sell it or change it. Now, these
masters, I tell you, because it is fit
should know them, your lord being a
distinguished companion of the order."

"Many thanks to you, Master Disour," said ; "thou givest all thou hast amongst us; I dare swear that, if thy riches were in thy as they are in thy head, thou wouldst be- them with as much free will. But, one favour more—tell us, who was that knight, Jason, thou didst mention?"

"He was a stalwart knight of antiquity," replied the Disour, "who went roaming about the world in a ship called Argo. He was a tall fellow, and had fifty companions of the like temper. They overcame enchantments, and did a thousand worthy feats, which it would take a long Christmas night to tell of. Thou must season thy curiosity touching Sir Jason, friend Gervase, till a more convenient time, when thou shalt know all about him. Now let us to the joust."

The company of the buttery then broke up, and the Disour and Gervase took the way to the place appointed for the tournament.

On their way thither Gervase said to his companion, "I know, old friend, that thou art

discreet; and that thou canst, if need be, keep a secret."

"Nay, if thou doubtest it," said the Disour, "keep thy secret thyself—I want none of it."

"Marry," replied the serving-man, "there is nothing I hate worse than doing so. I had rather encounter the hardest day's work that ever yet befell me than be compelled to keep a secret. There is a marvellous comfort in sharing it. Dost not think so?"

"Out with it, then," said the Disour, "and fear not but that it shall be safely deposited with me."

"And yet," said Gervase, "I would not have thee think that it is from any vain desire to chatter or to blab that I impart this to thee, but because I know thou wilt take an interest in it."

"Now thou must tell me," said the Disour, "for thou hast excited my curiosity; and I will have thy secret, or I will dig it from thy breast with thine own cellar-key."

"It shall not need," replied Gervase. "Thou didst know young Gui de Montaudun?"

"Knew him, and loved him, as well as any breathing," said the Disour. "If thou knowest aught of him," he added earnestly, "whether it be that he is dead or alive, I do beseech thee to impart it; for, truth to tell, it is for his sake that I am now here. Has intelligence been received of his fate? is he alive or dead? Speak,

good Gervase, I prithee—speak, and put an end to my doubts."

"He is alive, and well," replied Gervase; "nay more, he is in this city."

"Tell me, then, in what part, without a moment's delay," cried the Disour, turning about. "Let who will go see the joust; I shall hasten to seek Sir Gui."

"It is at the joust that you will see him," said Gervase, "and nowhere else. He is there, but in disguise. The state in which he has found matters on his return home have been so contrary to his wishes and his expectations, that he does not choose to be known, at least until this day's sport shall be over. You must wait

them were seats occupied by the sovereign and his court. The duke and the Knights of the Toison wore the superb habits of the order. The duchess and the ladies of the court glittered in all the splendour of beauty and the magnificence of decoration. A numerous body of nobility completed the exalted company who were met to witness the feats of the champions. The butler having procured for himself and the Disour a good place among the retainers of the knights, they sat there to see the jousts.

The first course was run between twenty knights, subjects of the duke, against twenty strangers. Amongst the former the Disour looked for Sir Gui, but in vain. Many of the knights he knew by their devices; but as some of them did not choose, upon this occasion, to wear their proper cognizances, and as the armour effectually concealed their faces, it was nearly impossible to ascertain who they were.

As, however, the Bastard of Burgundy wore his own arms upon his shield, and as they were made more conspicuous by the bar of illegitimacy which crossed them, and of which the Lord Anthony was rather proud, the Disour had no difficulty in recognising him. Next to the prince rode a knight whom he suspected to be Sir Gui. This knight wore a plain suit of polished steel armour, over which was a white surcoat, with a large red cross worked on the breast and back.

On his shield was painted a moon nearly covered with clouds, with the motto "Obscured, not extinguished." The bearing of this knight attracted the attention of the Disour, and he believed and wished that he might be Sir Gui.

On the first encounter several of the combatants on either side were unhorsed, and retired from the lists. By degrees the same accident happened to others, until at length there remained only two on either side. On that of the Burgundians these two were the Bastard and the stranger knight. The joust was for ten lances to be broken; and all had now been disposed of, save two. At the first of these courses the Bastard bore his adversary from the saddle;

paid his homage to the duchess, he mounted his horse, and rode to a balcony, in which there sate the Bishop of Valenciennes and his fair ward. The knight raised himself in his stirrups, and laid the ring on the cushion before the Lady Maud. This gallantry excited again the plaudits of the crowd; and the lady, in the confusion which she felt at exciting the universal attention of the company, dropped her glove. The stranger knight caught it as it was falling; and, after kissing it devoutly, he fastened it into his crest, and rode out of the lists. The Disour had now no doubt that this was Sir Gui, and he hastened to the gate by which he had seen him issue.

In the mean time the stranger knight's demeanour had given great offence to Sir Jacques Lelain, an approved knight of the duke's court, who thought that, as his pretensions to the hand of the Lady Maud were favored by the bishop, her guardian, no other person had a right to profess love for her. He therefore hastened to the marshal, to know who this intruder was; and, not being able to learn, he sent one of his friends to challenge him to run a course on the instant in honour of the Lady Maud, meaning to chastise him for his insolence on the spot.

The knight was talking to the Bastard when this message was delivered to him; and, although the latter would have dissuaded him from ac-

cepting the challenge at this moment, fatigued as he was with his recent exertions, Sir Gui resolved to adventure every thing in such a cause, and, only staying to mount a fresh horse, he rode again into the lists.

His antagonist was in his place; and, their arms being delivered to them, they encountered each other with so much vigour, that the lances were shivered from the handle. They were furnished with fresh weapons;—at the second course the lance of Sir Gui snapped in the middle; and, but for the adroitness with which he turned his horse, his adversary's spear would have *struck him*. Sir Jacques was highly enraged at this escape. In the succeeding course the lances broke; and Sir Jacques, violently spurring his horse at the

to acquire strength and dexterity every time he ran, struck Sir Jacques so well and so powerfully as to carry him fairly out of his saddle, and deposit him on the sand of the lists, where he lay incapable of motion.

The stranger staid not to look after him, but, kissing his hand to the Lady Maud, and bowing to the duchess, he again quitted the lists.

The Bastard was waiting for him, and warmly congratulated him on his success: they then rode together to the quarters of the prince, where they disarmed. The Disour had followed them, and was admitted to the chamber of the knight, by whom he was instantly recognised.

The greeting between them was warm and affectionate. The young warrior looked upon the Disour in the light of an old and kind friend, and the difference of their rank made none in their esteem for each other. Sir Gui was indebted to the Disour for many kindnesses in his boyhood; and he believed that the intense feeling for honorable distinction which had always animated him, and which had raised him to the station he held, had been first awakened by the chivalrous tales of the Disour, to which he had so often and so eagerly listened. The Disour's affection, which had been excited for the young orphan when he found him first in the baron's hall, had been increased as time developed the noble and manly qualities of his

character. He loved him as if he had been his own son; and the delight which he felt at again embracing him was now the keener in consequence of the fears he had very recently entertained that he should never again behold him.

Sir Gui shortly told his friend by what accidents he had found him in Ghent at this critical period. He had gone to the Turkish wars, commanding a troop of German recruits which had been raised by orders of the Cardinal Julian Cesarini. He was in the fatal combat of Varna, where the Sultan Morad gained a complete victory over Ladislaus, King of Poland, and the Pope's army.

This war, it is well known, was commenced by

excesses of his soldiery roused the Turks to vengeance. The Emperor Morad, whose sagacity and military skill were renowned throughout the world, had retired from the cares of empire, and had left his realm to be governed by his son. He was, however, called upon by the unanimous voice of the people to assume the command of the army, and he complied. The Christian and Turkish forces met on the plain of Varna, where the perfidy of the Christians received its just punishment. Nothing could exceed the valour with which they fought: the slaughter was immense, for none thought of flight. The King of Poland and the cardinal both fell in the engagement; and with them, as was said, ten thousand Poles.

The German troops, under the command of Sir Gui, fared better than any other part of the army. They had even made so considerable an impression on that part of the Turkish force against which they were opposed, that they might have turned the tide of the fight if they had been ably seconded. This, however, was found to be impossible; and, succours arriving to the Turks, nothing was now to be done but to retreat. Sir Gui consented to this with great reluctance; and, while he was in the rear of the retreating forces, with a lingering hope that some favorable circumstance might enable him to return to the field, he was struck from his horse

by an arrow from a Turkish bowman. A sharp charge at the same moment prevented his own troops from rescuing him; and, when he recovered his sensation, of which the pain of his wound and his fall had for a time deprived him, he found himself a prisoner.

Being the only person of condition who had been taken alive, he was carried before the sultan. This magnanimous prince, who was not less wise and merciful in peace than he was vigorous and brave in war, had observed Sir Gui's bearing in the battle, and the favorable impression which he had then received of him was strengthened by the interview which now took place between them. He was immediately released from the bonds which had been put upon him, was

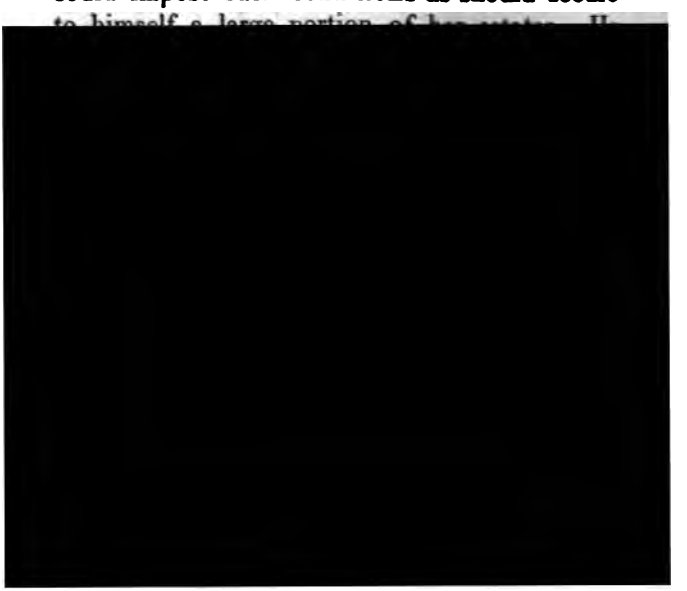
The generous Morad immediately granted him this permission, notwithstanding that the recent invasion of the Christians had taught him that they did not all strictly perform their engagements. He presented Sir Gui also with a valuable horse; and, having furnished him with the pecuniary means of performing his journey from his own purse, he bade him farewell, requiring him only to promise, in return for these favours, that he would not again bear arms against the Turks. They then parted, the sultan to lay down his sovereignty, and to retire to that calm privacy from which the exigencies of the state had called him, and Sir Gui to his native country, to his companions in arms, and to the lady of his love, whose constancy he never doubted, and whose hand he hoped now to obtain.

The disastrous news which awaited him on his arrival at the castle of Montacute fell like a thunderbolt upon him. He had expected to be greeted by a kind friend, who was to him in the light of a parent, and by a mistress whom he loved with the most passionate fervour: he found that the grave had closed over the one, and that the other was in the power of a man for whom he always felt an aversion which he could not account for, but which he looked upon as a sort of instinct to warn him against a determined foe.

After visiting the tomb of the baron, and paying that affectionate tribute to the memory of his

departed friend which grief wrung from him, he hastened to Ghent, whither he learnt the bishop had gone, and had carried with him the Lady Maud. He reached the city only the day before the tournay; and, upon consulting with his friend the Bastard, it was thought advisable that he should not at present discover himself, but enter the lists on the morrow as a stranger. He was induced to adopt this step in consequence of the information which the Bastard gave him as to the bishop's intention with respect to the Lady Maud.

The wily churchman, whose rapacity seemed to have increased with his years, had long wished to find a husband for his ward, upon whom he could impose such conditions as should secure



himself, he could easily be wrought upon to evil purposes by more cunning persons. Having no sense of his own, he willingly surrendered himself to the guidance of others, and was, in short, exactly that sort of

——— tool,
Which knaves do work with, called a fool.

The bishop found him admirably adapted for his end. He contrived, in the first place, to flatter him into a state of perfect intoxication by praising his courage: he then proposed his ward to him as a bride, and did not find it difficult to procure the consent of Sir Jacques that a large portion of the barony should be annexed to the church lands, in honour of his patroness, Saint Genevieve, to whose interposition the bishop attributed all Sir Jacques's good fortune.

The knight was now of the mature age of five-and-forty, and, little as he was fitted for wooing, he suffered himself to believe that he could easily persuade the Lady Maud to marry him. Being introduced by the bishop, he said what he thought very gallant things to the lady; and, as she feared at once to repel him with the contempt which she felt for his addresses, he mistook her forbearance for a more tender feeling. He therefore announced himself openly as her lover, and wore a scarf at the tournay, which the bishop had presented to him as from the lady herself.

The bishop encouraged his intention of joining the jousts, and of announcing himself as the lady's knight, because this, by increasing Sir Jacques's reputation, would excuse him in giving his ward to a man who had but little fortune, and whose military renown he intended to allege as the reason for his consenting to the union, which he meant to take place immediately after the festival.

All these particulars the Bastard had learnt from Sir Jacques, who had done him the honour to make him his confidant, and had solicited his advice as to the manner in which he should demean himself towards his intended bride.

The events of the tournay we have already seen. Sir Gui, after having told the Disour all that we have related with respect to the Lady Maud and his rival, expressed the most anxious desire to gain an interview with her.

"The difficulties are, however, very numerous," said he: "she is confined by the bishop, with the utmost caution, in a house in which he resides during his stay in Ghent, and which is situated near the town-walls, towards the western gate. An old duenna, and the bishop's steward, Mahuot, whose character you know well, are her guards."

"I know Mahuot to deserve hanging as well as any man in this or the next country," replied the Disour. "It is but a short time since

he stabbed an honest burgher of Valenciennes, because the poor old man would not submit to be cheated in perfect silence. The old burgher's son vows vengeance against him, and I think even the bishop's protection will not be strong enough to shield his vassal from the boy's wrath."

"Mahuot is a stout fellow, and has been a soldier," said Sir Gui.

"And the young man of Valenciennes is also a tall lad of his hands," replied the Disour. "But no matter; I'll instantly set about this affair, and try if I cannot procure you a meeting with the young lady. Before, however, I do so," he added, "I must tell you some news that I have lately heard."

He then related to the knight his interview at the "Leathern Bottle" with the friar, and his assertion that Sir Gui was the real heir of the late Baron de Montaudun.

The knight listened to the account with great attention, and, as may be imagined, with no small interest. He was not, however, disposed to trust much to its authenticity.

"Nothing," he said, "can be more improbable than that, if what he said be really true, it should have remained a secret until this moment. I have too good reason to believe that I am no more than what I am commonly supposed to be. The circumstances of my birth are as obscure as even my enemies can wish. To my own achieve-

ments alone I shall owe all the honours which I can ever possess; and I will ennoble my name, or I will die in the attempt. Nevertheless I should like to see this same friar: where is he to be found?"

"Nay," replied the Disour, "that is far more than I can tell. He said he was coming to this city; and, as I knew that I should meet him again—for he is as great a wanderer as I am—I made no inquiries about his particular destination; but, if I had known that I should so soon fall in with you, I had not let him part so easily. I shall light upon him ere long; and in the mean time I will go and see about the Lady Maud. Farewell, then, for the present."

tion, of Sir Gui, the Lady Maud was not among the company, although the bishop was there. The only comfort which he could derive from this untoward circumstance was in the hope that the Disour, on whose dexterity and intelligence he knew he could rely, would be able to procure him an introduction to the place in which she was kept a prisoner.

The Lord Anthony wished to present his friend to the duke; but Sir Gui, although he was desirous to pay his respects to his sovereign, was now so anxious for the Disour's return, that he begged his friend to postpone this ceremony for some more fitting opportunity. He paced up and down the hall with so much uneasiness, that it required all his efforts to prevent it from becoming apparent.

Notwithstanding the *incognito* which he endeavored to preserve; he was soon known to be the knight who had been the victor in the sports of the morning. All eyes were fixed upon him; and whispers circulated throughout the hall, some of which were so loud as to reach his ears. Just as he began to think that he must, in self-defence, withdraw, he perceived the Disour making his way towards him through the crowd with which the hall was filled.

"How now?" he said; "what news do you bring?"

"Quit the hall immediately," replied the Di-

sour, "and as privately as possible: I will be in waiting at the gate."

Sir Gui complied with this advice; and almost as soon as he was in the street he found himself joined by his friend, who threw a large cloak about his shoulders, recommending him to keep it drawn close, so as to conceal the splendour of his dress, which would, perhaps, have excited observation. He then told him that he thought he had found the means of gaining access to the lady; and, as they proceeded rapidly along the streets leading towards the bishop's house, he explained what he had been doing.

"I went," he said, "to the house, at which, at first, I found it extremely difficult to gain admittance. I had previously learned that the bi-

marriage, made her wholly mine. She ushered me into a small chamber, in which I found the Lady Maud sitting. The young lady recognised me at the first glance; but, like a discreet damsel, as she is, was too prudent to seem to know me. The old woman, by way of excusing her own folly, pretended that she had brought me to spell the fortunes of the young lady. Taking her hand, I rattled over the ordinary trash which the gipsies tell to girls; and which, as it is always about a lover, and as girls always have a wish to have lovers, either is, or is believed to be, quite true. I, however, contrived through this nonsense to make her ladyship understand that I alluded to you in all my predictions; and that you were only waiting an opportunity to throw yourself at her feet. I was now desirous to get the old woman out of the room, that I might have a moment's conversation with the Lady Maud; and in this I at length succeeded. I asked, with a most solemn air, whether Dame Marguerite had ever had her nativity cast. She replied in the affirmative; and I then begged her to let me see the horoscope. After a little persuasion she went away to fetch it; and in the opportunity which her absence afforded I arranged with the Lady Maud the means of your visiting her, which must be thus:—

"At the end of the garden-wall, which we are now approaching, is a small bay window, which

you may see. It opens from a closet adjoining the chamber in which the Lady Maud and the gouvernante usually sit. This window will be just within your reach as you stand on the wall, and with some exertion you can gain admittance by it. You must, however, be cautious, because, if you fall, you are certain to break your neck. I know if it led into an enemy's castle you would not hesitate to attempt it, though half a dozen spikes opposed your entrance; and I don't apprehend you will be more backward on this occasion."

"Prithee leave all this preaching, my trusty friend," interrupted Sir Gui. "I have listened with most praiseworthy moderation to a very long

would be better that the younger lady should not be present at our next interview, because the imparting such secrets to a third person was always highly dangerous. She seemed to feel the force of this, and said she would receive me in a room on the lower floor. The porter has orders to admit me: you, therefore, must wait here for a few minutes; and, if I do not return, you may be sure that I have engaged the old lady. You must then mount the wall, and gain the window. The Lady Maud will be awaiting you; and I will take care that you shall have time enough to arrange with her some plan of flight, or at least of resistance to the power of the bishop and the proposed marriage. Away, then! and now for my character of seer."

The Disour then went towards the door, leaving Sir Gui standing behind a buttress of the wall, which effectually concealed him from view.

As soon as he saw the gate opened and shut upon the Disour Sir Gui prepared to mount the wall, which, although of some height, was not very difficult to him, and with a single spring he gained the window. As soon as he had entered, he found himself, as the Disour had told him, in a closet, at the end of which was a door. He opened it hastily—and the next moment saw the Lady Maud in his arms.

Although she had been prepared for the reception of her lover, she could not command the

emotions of delight which filled her heart, and almost overwhelmed her senses. She reclined for some moments in his embrace, in a rapturous trance; and it was not until a flood of tears had relieved her that she regained her recollection. She would then have withdrawn herself from her lover's grasp with a shrinking modesty, but that his arms still held her.

"In this moment, dearest!" he murmured, "do I find bliss enough to reward all the pains and perils which I have endured since our last sad parting."

"And I," she replied, "find that your presence, like a charm, dispels all the grief and terror which have of late beset me."

After the first few moments of tenderness had passed, and when the spirits of the lovers had been restored to something like calmness, they recollected that their interview must necessarily be a short one. Sir Gui learnt from the Lady Maud that she was subjected to the most odious tyranny by the bishop, which was rendered still more disgusting by the formal and hypocritical respect he pretended to pay her. "This, however," she said, "she could have suffered, but that his insolent attempt to marry her to Sir Jacques Lelain had made her apprehend that his designs would not be bounded by the dominion which the law for a short time allowed him over her person and her estates. Now, however, that you are re-

turned," she added, "I have no fears: I shall feel myself in perfect security, and shall not hesitate to defy the proud priest."

"Do so, dearest, then," said Sir Gui, "in the most effectual manner, by at once throwing off the domination which he so unjustly exercises over you. Quit this prison immediately; give me that title to protect you which your noble father intended to confer upon me; and, were this bishop ten times as powerful as he is, he shall not dare to interfere with your happiness."

"No," replied the lady, "I will never do that clandestinely which ought to be done in the face of the whole world. It befits not the daughter of the Baron de Montacute—it befits not the affianced bride of Sir Gui de Montaudun—to fly meanly from an authority which she despises. You smile, Gui; but I am become marvellously courageous since your arrival. I will appeal to the duke in person; and, when this and all other honorable means shall have failed—but not until then—I care not if I confess that I shall be ready to run away with you."

Gui repeated his persuasions that she would at least quit the bishop's palace, and bestow herself in the Urauline convent of the city, the abbess of which was a lady of noble birth and renowned piety. Here, he represented to her, she could, with more certainty and security, make that appeal to the duke which she meditated.

He could not, however, succeed in shaking her resolution—"She was determined," she said, "that her persecutor should not have any pretence for justifying either the insolence he had already practised towards her or any that he might afterwards attempt."

"Let us not forget," she continued, "that we owe it to ourselves to oppose frankly and openly the designs of our enemies. The duke will not suffer injustice like that of the bishop to triumph: you are already in his favour, and I am sure he loves not the churchman. Boldly demand of his highness my hand in marriage, as a bride affianced to you by my late father; and let us abide the issue of that experiment."

The impetuosity of Sir Gui's feelings would have induced him to prefer the shorter mode of at once freeing his mistress from the control of the bishop: yet he could not but perceive that her advice was good, and that the means she proposed were more consistent with her rank. He therefore acquiesced in this determination. Their conversation then turned upon that subject most interesting to lovers—themselves. Sir Gui was obliged to relate minutely all the adventures he had passed; and he forgot all the suffering which had accompanied them while he received what he thought their best guerdon in the tears and admiration of his listening mistress.

The lovers had thought of nothing so little as

the flight of time, and hours might have elapsed but for the abrupt termination which was put to their discourse by Sir Gui hearing the voice of the Disour, in loud and threatening tones, mingled with others in high altercation.

"Fly, fly!" said the Lady Maud; "or you will be discovered."

"I cannot leave him—perhaps in danger," he said, proceeding to the opposite door of the apartment. "Farewell, dearest! farewell! Soon we shall meet again, when no restraint shall mar our happiness." As he spoke he embraced her tenderly; and then rushed out at the door, and down the stairs, towards the place whence he had heard his friend's voice.

He arrived exactly in the right moment, for he found the Disour in the hall, with his back against the wall and his sword drawn, vigorously repelling the attacks of several servants in the bishop's livery. Sir Gui saw some one standing below him on the stairs: it was too dark to distinguish persons accurately, and it was no time to stand upon ceremony; so at a single spring, in which he overset this person, who was no other than the bishop, he was amongst the assailants. Before he had time to draw his sword he had knocked down two of the four men who were attacking the Disour; and then, joining his friend, and having bared his weapon, the others thought fit to draw off. The Disour, who knew that a

very short time would bring up a reinforcement, bade Sir Gui retreat; and then, by slow steps gaining the further end of the hall, he opened the gate, and they got safely into the street with no other hurt than some slight bruises which the Disour had received from the bishop's steward.

When they were out the Disour manfully took to his heels; and Sir Gui was obliged to keep near him at the same pace, lest he should lose his guide in a part of the town of which he knew nothing.

At length they arrived at the quarters of the Bastard of Burgundy, where Sir Gui was lodged; and, having gained his own apartment, he besought the Disour, when he had recovered his breath, to tell him how he had been discovered

duke's banquet. He had the impudence to threaten me with the discipline of the cudgel; and, for aught I know, he would have administered it, but that the sight of my sword kept him back. I care not who knows that I do not love fighting: but then I love a drubbing less; and, if I must either be beaten or fight, I always choose the latter. I believe, however, that for once Mahuot would have kept his promise in my favour but for your appearance; and, next to having brought me out of the hands of the knaves, I am grateful to you for having knocked down stairs that greater knave, their master."

"Was it the bishop whom I tumbled over on the stairs?" asked Sir Gui.

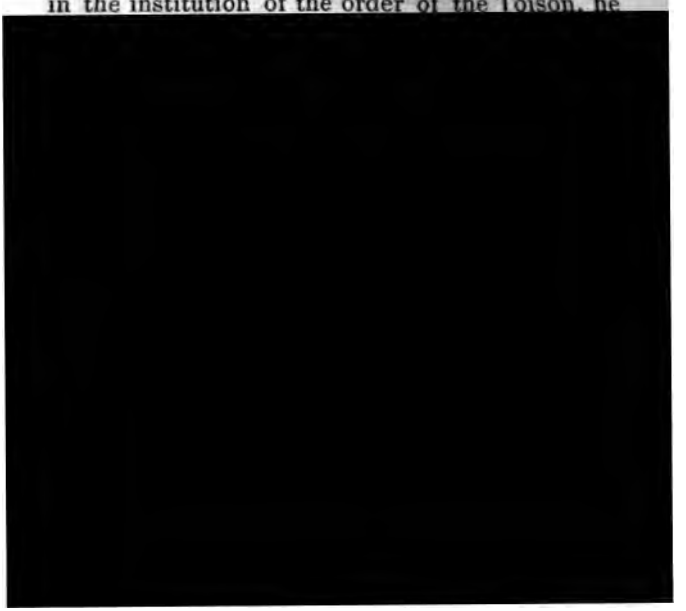
"In good faith it was," replied the Disour; "and I honour you for having done so, wittingly or by chance."

"The bishop must thank himself for it," said Sir Gui: "he was very much in my way; and, if he continues to remain so, it is like I may overturn him again."

Sir Gui then proceeded to question the Disour as to the possibility of finding the friar who had held so mysterious a discourse respecting his legitimacy. The Disour thought it would not be difficult; and when Sir Gui told him that he felt anxious about it, and that the Bastard of Burgundy had especially recommended him to make an inquiry on the subject, he promised to go in

search of the monk on the morrow. He then bade Sir Gui farewell for the night, and retired to console himself for the fatigues of the day in a carouse with his friend Gerald.

The following day was the anniversary of that on which the late Duke John had been basely murdered in the presence of the now reigning King of France. The Duke Philip had already satisfied his vengeance by the long and fatal war which he had carried into the country of the traitors; he even fancied that he had forgiven Charles the share which he had taken in the matter: but he had resolved that the memory of so cruel and wicked a deed should not be lost; and, in the institution of the order of the Toison, he

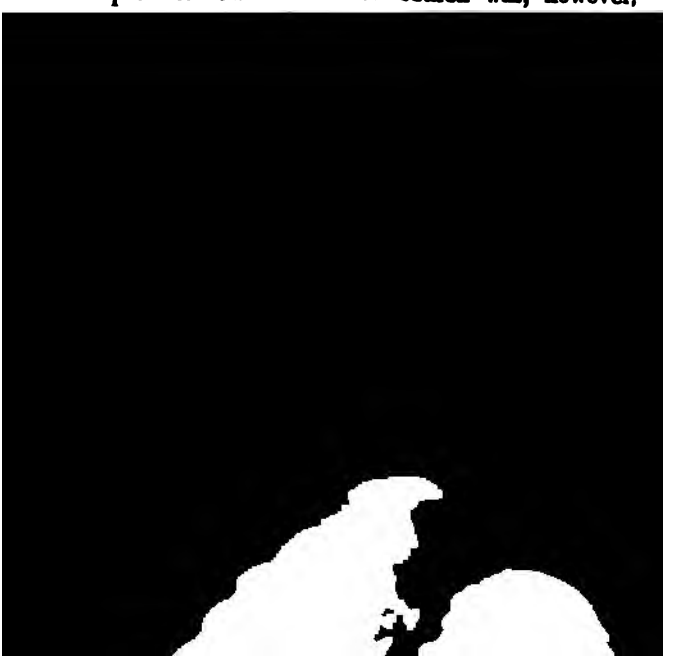


perform the offices of the day. The abbesses of the several convents, accompanied by their nuns, were seated behind an open grating, placed at the side of the high altar. The barons and knights from every part of the duke's dominions, with many of those whom the fame of the festival had attracted from foreign countries, joined the train, decked in all the heavy, but gorgeous, magnificence of the prevailing modes. Ladies of the rarest beauty and the highest birth graced the ceremony with their presence. The burghers and the artisans of Ghent displayed upon this occasion all their finery; and even the poorest members of the community made an effort to improve the wretchedness of their appearance in honour of a ceremonial in which they fancied themselves to be concerned. The people of the Netherlands have always been remarkable for their fondness for religious spectacles; and the duke, who was as politic as he was brave and virtuous, had not forgotten this propensity of theirs among the motives which had led him to the institution of the present ceremony.

The presence of this multitude added to the imposing effect of the cathedral, which is of itself one of the most striking and elegant of the religious edifices in this part of Europe. Near the high altar an elevated throne was placed for the duke, and on each side lower seats for the most distinguished of the courtiers; next were

the places allotted to the ladies; and afterwards those for the nobles, who were arranged according to their several ranks. The side-aisles were filled with the other spectators, who, ranged in a line with the white marble pillars which support the roof, left the middle aisle open for the passage of the illustrious persons who came to the church.

The Disour had repaired to the cathedral at an early hour, in the hope of finding, amongst the friars and monks whom their duties would lead thither, the Carmelite whose conversation at the "Leathern Bottle" had made so powerful an impression on him. His search was, however,



continued to regale them, and to excuse his impudence.

Close beside him stood a little old man, dressed in dark grey serge, whose quick glances showed that he perfectly appreciated the Disour's jests; but the solemn gravity of his countenance remained undisturbed. He looked as if he had resolved not to laugh. This person usually sate near the door of the cathedral, and distributed the holy water with a sprinkling brush, from a vessel hanging against one of the pillars, to the persons who entered the church. The crowd had thrust him from his place; but he continued to hold the water-pot in his hand, and to furnish all the devout within his reach with the sanctified element.

The Disour was rather nettled at the old man's gravity, for he thought it was uncivil in the last degree not to laugh at his witticisms. At length he addressed him:—"Hast made a vow, Father Greybeard," he asked, "never to let a profane smile disturb any of those wrinkles which hang like a net over thy face?"

The old man shook his head, but did not reply.

"Nay, answer me, I pray thee," said the Disour again: "thou mayest talk if thou wilt not laugh; there can be no harm in speaking."

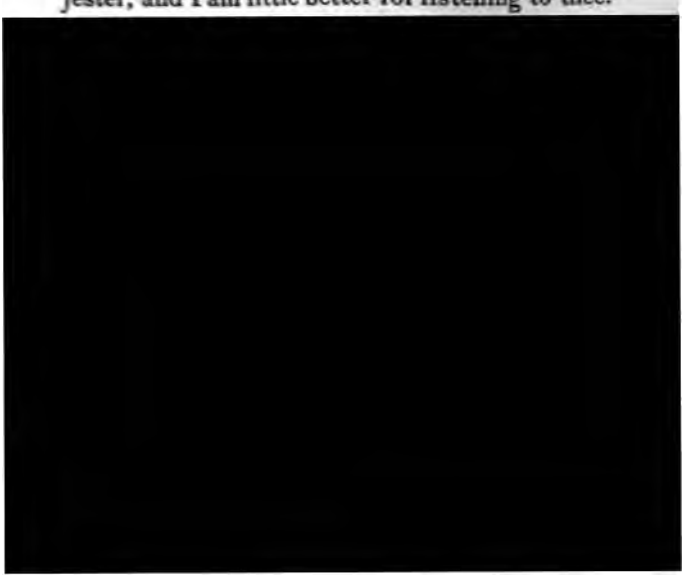
"In speaking idly there may be," replied the old man slowly, and without discomposing a muscle.

"And didst thou never speak idly?" asked the Disour.

"Ay, marry, as idly as thou dost," replied the old man; "but the sin is repented of, and, I trust, forgiven."

"Piously said, old Mortification!" rejoined the Disour: "and thou dost then really think that thou mayest even be forgiven for the sin of having laughed? But tell me, I beseech thee, when it was that thou didst commit so heinous an offence: it must have been in thy boyhood, and then but once. I can swear, by the look of those cobweb folds, into which thy wrinkles have fallen, that thou hast not for the last sixty years, at least, disturbed them by a profane smile."

"Go to," said the old man; "thou art an idle jester, and I am little better for listening to thee."



came the duke, accompanied by the duchess, and followed by their gallant son Charles, and by the not less valiant, though in his birth less fortunate, Anthony the Bastard. The younger members of the duke's family came afterwards, and next the Bishop of Ghent. Then the Bishop of Valenciennes, the duke's chancellor, his marshal, and the other chief officers of his household. The ladies, the noblemen, the knights, and their esquires, followed in their several places.

The Disour was gazing with delight and admiration at the assembly of beauty and worth which this procession presented, when, just as his friend Sir Gui passed before him at the head of the knights, which place he assumed in right of his recent triumph at the tournament, he felt his arm strongly grasped, and, looking round, he saw the old man, with whom he had lately been talking, clinging to him apparently in great terror.

"What ails thee, old friend?" he asked.

The old man did not reply, but, clinging more closely to his arm with one hand, he pointed with the other to Sir Gui, upon whom his eyes were intently fixed.

The Disour feared that some fit had seized him, and, turning round, he supported the old man, while he again asked what had caused this agitation.

"It is true, then," muttered the old man—who

seemed to recover himself as the procession passed on and he lost sight of Sir Gui—"it is true, then, that the dead return to the earth."

"What dead didst thou fancy thou couldst see?" asked the Disour, and he led the old man towards the door, as the crowd pressed on in a contrary direction, closing up the rear of the procession.

"Fancy!" repeated the old man, gasping with emotion; "it was no fancy. I saw him in all the lustiness of youth, bearing the same bannerol, clad in the same armour, and looking as gallant and gay as he did when he entered that fatal hall which he never more quitted alive."

"What he?" asked the Disour: "thy wits

the Disour's speech; "why holds he not his rank with the highest barons?"

"Of whom dost thou speak?" asked the Disour more earnestly, as he now thought there was some meaning in the old man's discourse: "I conjure thee to tell me at once what baron thou meanest."

"The Baron Philip de Montaudun, one of the bravest and most courteous nobles that this land ever saw."

"And wast thou present at his death?"

"Ay, in good faith was I," replied the old man, shuddering as the recollection passed through his mind: "I saw him basely and treacherously struck down, in the hall of Montereau, from behind, by a caitiff who dare never have met him face to face."

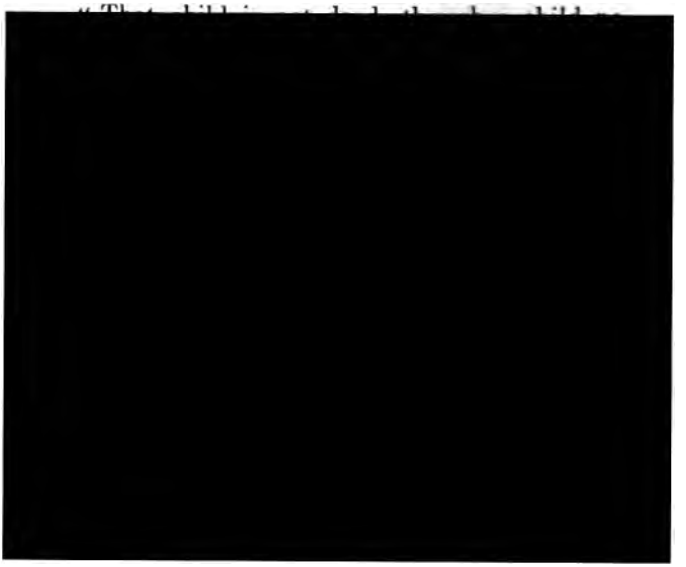
The Disour's interest was now highly excited; and, in the belief that he should draw from the old man, to whom chance had thus introduced him, some information which might be serviceable to Sir Gui, he encouraged him to proceed.

"When the murderers had withdrawn," continued the old man, "I approached the baron—the only one of all his noble company in whom life remained. I lifted his head, and stanched, as well as I could, the blood which flowed from some of his wounds; and, at his request, I brought to him a holy monk, who received his last confession, and gave him absolution. He

died like a pious Christian and a good knight. One reflection alone seemed to weigh upon his heart, and to inflict upon him more pain than the agonies of death."

"What could that be?" asked the Disour eagerly.

"It was," said the old man, "that he left an infant son, his only child, by an English lady to whom he was married, but who had not been publicly recognised as his wife. He charged the monk who tended him to see his son placed under proper guardianship, and educated as became his rank; but that child is, I suppose, dead, for, as I hear, the barony is now held by the proud Bishop of Valenciennes."



"But by what accident, I pray thee tell me," said the Disour, "didst thou happen to be present at Montereau on the fatal day you speak of?"

"Alas!" replied the old man, "I was then as light and foolish a piece of human vanity as ever abused Heaven's mercy." I was the jester of the Dauphin's court, and might have died in the same thoughtless calling but for the horror which that base murder occasioned. Immediately after that I renounced my sinful profession, and have ever since devoted myself to works of piety and mortification."

The Disour recollected that, in the relation which the monk had given of the death of the Baron de Montaudun, he had mentioned that the Dauphin's jester was present. That this was the same individual he could not doubt; and he was not much astonished at the transition of so weak-minded a person as the jester was described to be from the nonsensical profession of a court fool to one of useless, but unceasing, devotion. He shortly recounted to the old man the manner of Sir Gui's education, and the urgent necessity which there was at this moment for procuring the proofs of his legitimacy. By pressing the *quondam* jester on that which he saw was his weak point, and insisting on the religious necessity of his obeying the injunctions of a dying man, he screwed up his resolution, and

obtained from him a promise to declare, whenever he should be called upon, the tenour of the late baron's dying declaration.

The Disour now only wanted to find the monk, with whose assistance he hoped it might be practicable to reinstate Sir Gui in the dignity which belonged to him; and he thought, wisely enough, that no opportunity could be more favorable for this purpose than the present. The Bishop of Valenciennes was here, in Ghent, stripped in a considerable degree of that power which he possessed in his own demesne, and which must have made a litigation with him extremely tedious, and even uncertain in its result. The duke, too, was well disposed towards Sir Gui; and the fame of his achievements at Varna, with his success at the more recent jousts, had excited a very favorable feeling on his behalf amongst the barons, to which his courteous manner and graceful presence had greatly added. The bishop, on the contrary, was almost universally disliked. The clergy, over whom he exercised a tyrannical dominion—the proprietors and tenants of the lands in his see, from whom he rigorously exacted the uttermost dues for which his craft and ingenuity could find a pretext—the members of the duke's council, whom he treated with an insolent scorn, and, amongst these, the chancellor in particular—all combined in one feeling of detestation against him; and all would willingly

have contributed to his mortification, and even to his ruin, if that had been practicable.

It was with good reason, therefore, that the Disour—who, from the constant intercourse he held with persons of the highest condition, knew, without seeming to pay attention to, all the political intrigues of the time—thought that, if he could bring the question of Sir Gui's legitimacy before the duke in his court at this time, he should secure its being fairly tried, and by a short process; although the latter was almost as rare in the jurisprudence of the fifteenth century as it is even in our own. The sanguine temper of his mind was also highly excited by his recent discoveries, and he entertained no doubt of the success of Sir Gui's claim.

He consulted the old man, who was of course well acquainted with the city, as to the probability of his finding the monk; and, learning that there was in it a convent of Carmelites renowned for the strictness of their lives, he resolved to hasten thither as soon as the ceremony should be finished. Having arranged a meeting in the evening with the old man, they returned together into the church.

The ceremony was finished, and the procession about to quit the cathedral. On this occasion, however, the order was somewhat reversed: the monks, who had been employed in the holy ceremonies, preceded the duke on his return,

bearing the rich reliques which belonged to the cathedral, and the religious banners of their various orders. In this troop of friars, "black, white, and grey," the quick eye of the Disour now discovered the monk of whom he was in quest; and, being unwilling to quit the cathedral at that moment, he whispered to his new acquaintance a request that he would ascertain whither the father went, and bring him intelligence.

The old man readily undertook the commission, and filed out of the cathedral in the crowd of monks.

The duke was now approaching, accompanied as he had been before. Very shortly previous to this the Disour had seen, on the other side of the church, several of the chief burghers of Valenciennes, with whose faces he was familiar. They stood in a crowd, and seemed occasionally to be talking to a man who was in the midst of them, but whose face the Disour could not see, because that person seemed studiously to shun observation by holding up his cap before him, so as to cover his visage.

As the duke reached the place where the burghers were standing, on a sudden they drew open, so as to permit the passage of the man whom the Disour had so particularly remarked, and who now, rushing out, threw himself on his knees before the duke.

He was a young man, well made, but rather slight, and dressed in complete mourning. The Disour, as soon as he saw his face, recognised him to be the youth of whom he had spoken to Sir Gui, and whose intention in thus appealing to the duke he could not doubt.

"Justice, my liege sovereign!" cried the youth. "In the name of the Duke John—in the name of that murdered father whose memory you just now solemnly and piously celebrated—I beseech you to do me justice."

"Justice for what?" asked the sovereign, who was evidently moved by the petitioner's allusion to the fatal event which occupied his whole thoughts, and hardly less by the passionate manner in which it was made. The duke stopped, and the whole of the procession halted.

"Justice on the murderer of *my* father," replied the youth: "his blood yet cries out for vengeance; and here, before your grace, from whom alone I can hope for right, do I appeal his murderer."

"But why do you make this appeal to me?" asked the duke; "the laws are rightfully administered, and they have provided a sufficient punishment for such a crime."

"But the criminal is beyond the reach of those laws, great duke," replied the youth: "a protection so powerful encircles him, that the arm of the law is baffled by it."

"Beware of what you say, knave," cried the duke angrily. "By the power of Heaven I swear that no subject of mine is or shall be beyond the law! Make good what you have uttered, or prepare for the worst punishment."

"May the heaviest tortures fall on me," replied the youth, still kneeling, "if I say aught but that which is true, and which I will maintain."

"Rise then, sirrah," said the duke; "and, albeit neither the time nor the place are fitting for such discussions, yet, for the name which you have uttered, you shall have the justice you crave. Now, tell us what you would?"

The youth rose at the duke's bidding, and proceeded to relate the cause of his appeal:— "My father," he said, "who was a burgher of Valenciennes, was stabbed by a retainer of the bishop, who now stands beside your highness, in the presence of numerous witnesses. The murderer kept himself shut up in his house, and defied all my attempts to reach him; else, with my own hand, I had obtained that for which I am now your grace's petitioner. I then appealed to the bishop, who is the supreme judge of the city of Valenciennes. The reverend father examined certain witnesses, by whose testimony he was satisfied that my father had provoked the blow which caused his death, and thereupon decreed the murderer to be fined one hundred marks, to be disposed of in masses for the repose

of the dead. I will say nothing in this presence of the justice of the sentence; it speaks loudly for itself: but I claim the privilege which is given me by the laws of Valenciennes, and which provide that the nearest of kin to the person slain may challenge his murderer to the fight *à l'ontrance*. This privilege has been denied to me at Valenciennes; but I claim it again here, where I beseech your grace to grant it me as you value the memory of your own father, and by the deep vengeance with which you have satisfied his murder."

"This sounds fairly and manfully," said the duke; "but who vouches for the truth of this statement?"

"We do all!" cried the burghers of Valenciennes; and as they spoke they advanced.

"What say you, bishop?" asked the duke, turning to him with a stern expression.

"I say," he replied, "that justice has been done—full and ample justice, according to the laws—save in regard to the combat. That, I confess, I have withheld in mercy to the youth, whose strength can in no way compete with that of the person he accuses."

"And that person is your servant?" said the duke.

"He is my tried and faithful servant," replied the bishop; "but Heaven forefend that I should

therefore judge him partially! The death of the last burgher happened in a quarrel, which, as was proved to me by good witnesses, he himself provoked."

"My liege," cried the young man, "for the justice of which his reverence speaks, that may be guessed at when you know that of *all* these burghers," pointing to them, "who saw the murder, not one was examined by his grace. For the prowess of the caitiff murderer I care not: a good conscience makes me bold, and the righteousness of the cause will supply me strength: if not, I shall die in the attempt to revenge my father; and I can meet him in the

perceived by the men of Valenciennes, who detained him. At the duke's question they dragged him forward.

"Let him also be kept in close confinement," continued the duke. "When shall the combat take place?"

"Now—instantly!" cried the young man, "or as soon as your grace wills."

"To-morrow, then, be it," said the duke: "throw down your glove, boy."

The youth stepped forward; and, casting down his glove, exclaimed "I appeal Nicolas Mahuot of foul murder, which I will prove upon his body—So help me, God!"

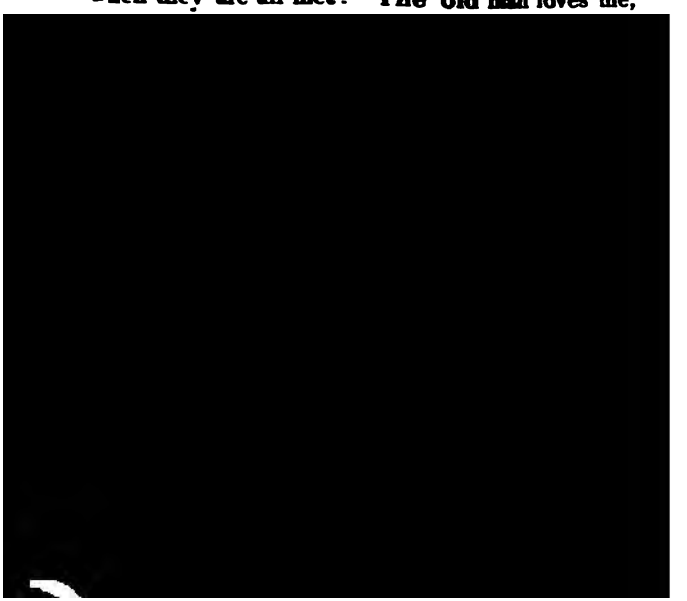
Mahuot, who, although one of the worst men, did not want courage, and who thought, moreover, that he should gain an easy victory over the stripling who defied him, picked it up very coolly, and said "I accept the challenge; and will prove, by the blessing of Heaven, that the accuser is a foul liar, and that I am a true man."

"God help the righteous!" said the duke: "now keep them safely," and he signed for the procession to go on.

In a short time the church was cleared, and the Disour went in search of Sir Gui, whom he found with the Bastard of Burgundy. He related in the presence of the latter, whose attachment to Sir Gui he well knew, the discovery he had

made: and a council was then held as to the future steps to be taken in consequence of it.

"I have it," cried the Bastard, after several expedients had been suggested and rejected. "You and I, Gui, although we may be able to do somewhat with couched lance and belted brand, can win little profit from crafty priests and courtiers. The duke's old chancellor is as wily as a fox—honest, so to speak, remembering always that he is a lawyer—and an inveterate hater of the bishop. Let our friend here (pointing to the Disour) take his monk and his fool to the chancellor;—a goodly company they will make when they are all met! The old man loves me,



also warmly approved of it; and the Bastard, accompanied by Sir Gui, hastened to the chancellor's house, where he soon succeeded in persuading him to undertake the affair.

Soon afterwards the little mortified remnant of a jester came to the place appointed by the Disour, accompanied by the monk. After they had mutually explained what had occurred since they met at the "Leathern Bottle," the Disour communicated to the friar the proposal of the Bastard respecting the chancellor, whose assistance was just that which the holy man thought necessary to the success of their cause. In a very short time an intimation from Sir Gui was received, in consequence of which the Disour conducted his two witnesses to the chancellor's abode.

The chancellor was not quite so bad as the Bastard, in his flighty way of talking, had made him appear. He was the member of a profession, which, as it familiarizes its members with the worst and weakest moods of the human mind, begets in them a sceptical indifference to the finer sentiments of our nature. He was, moreover, a courtier; and the course of his observations in this capacity had only sharpened his wits, without expanding his heart. The worst that could be said of him—and Heaven knows it is bad enough—was that his virtues and his vices were negative. He, however, entered

warmly into the interests of Sir Gui, and promised to further them by every means in his power. His chief inducement might be to work the mortification of the Bishop of Valenciennes; or it might be—— But we will leave inquiring into motives, since they are always of so strange a nature, that, like counterfeit coin, although they look well enough to the eye, they often lose all their brilliancy and their value in the handling.

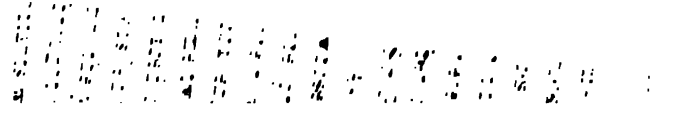
He was, in any event, a powerful ally to Sir Gui; his legal knowledge, his habits of business, and his influence, were all highly valuable; and the Disour, who appreciated these things better, perhaps, than either the Bastard or his friend, thought himself blest in the acquisition. The chancellor listened patiently to his story: he then made his secretary take down the quondam jester's deposition, after which he dismissed him. He, however, retained the friar and the Disour, with whom he had a conversation which lasted several hours.

Sir Gui, in the mean time, visited the house of the bishop, in the hope of seeing, or procuring some intelligence respecting, the Lady Maud; but in vain. The house was entirely closed, and every thing about it seemed in perfect repose. Wearied with long watching, he returned home and went to bed, having first arranged with the Bastard the hour at which they would proceed

to witness the combat, which had been appointed for the following morning, between the youth who had made his appeal to the duke and the bishop's steward.

The law by virtue of which the combat was to take place had been rarely exercised at Valenciennes, and was not even known at Ghent. It had, therefore, besides the interest which the circumstance of a son challenging his father's murderer must naturally excite, the additional recommendation of novelty to the people, who are fond of spectacles in any shape, but are beyond all measure delighted with such as are likely to have a bloody termination.

The news was soon spread throughout the city that two burgesses of Valenciennes were about to do battle, *à l'outrance*, before the duke; and at an early hour in the morning a great concourse of people had assembled at the spot where the combat was to take place. This was a round space, closely fenced about with strong barricadoes, of the height of an ordinary sized man's head. The surrounding ground was made to slope towards this fence; a second fence was fixed all round, at the distance of six yards from the inner enclosure; and within were stationed the city guard, in order to prevent the people from approaching any nearer. There was but one entrance to the close lists, which was made only large enough to admit two persons abreast.



this occasion discharged by the chief bailiff of the city. He read aloud the challenge of Jacotin, in which he accused Nicolas of having murdered his father; and concluded by defying him to a mortal combat, in which he offered to prove the truth of his accusation on his antagonist's body. There were no trumpets preceding or following this ceremony, as in knightly fights; but, when the reading was finished, Jacotin loudly ejaculated "So help me, God!"

The bailiff then read the reply and defiance of Nicolas, in which he denied having slain the father of Jacotin in any other than fair and lawful combat, and accepted the challenge of the appellant.

A priest then drew near, and administered to each of the combatants an oath upon the crucifix, by which they swore that they had used neither spells nor magical devices; that they had no secret arms or poison; and that they would rely upon nothing in the ensuing fight but the justice of the cause and their own manhood.

Two bowls were then placed before each of the champions, one of which was filled with grease, and the other with ashes. They rubbed the grease plentifully over their leathern coats, and then cleaned their hands as well as they could with the ashes given them for this purpose, and by their roughness to enable them to grasp the weapons with which they were to fight.

[redacted] and a crushed sugar was [redacted] of them, to enable them to [redacted] and to hold their heads [redacted] them considered to be "the [redacted] in earth." Of all these [redacted] before them with as [redacted] as they had been princes about [redacted] Two shields were then [redacted] and shape exactly like those [redacted] but the holes for the [redacted] to be [redacted] the shield to be [redacted] being next the elbow. [redacted] in their shields, [redacted] a stout staff of [redacted] each foot long. All things [redacted]

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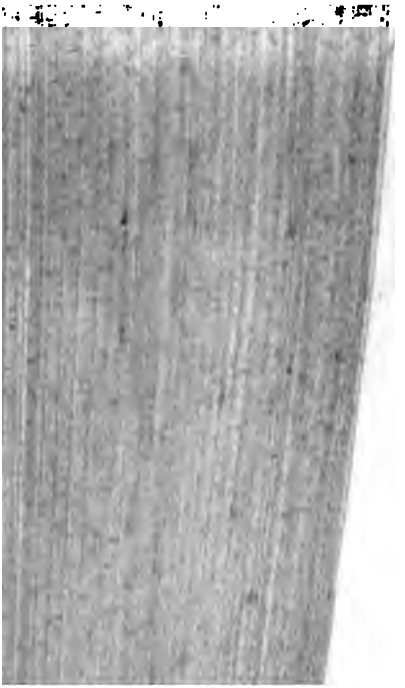
colas, on the contrary, was rather improved by the condensed shape in which his close dress presented him. On looking at the two champions there seemed no chance for the younger and slighter; and, although there were many of his well-wishers among the spectators, there were few who did not pity him as a devoted man.

Nicolas looked warily at his enemy, and seemed resolved not to strike the first blow. Jacotin, who saw this, had just made up his mind, that, to induce his antagonist to fight, he must set him the example, when he was surprised to receive a blow which made him stagger. He was, however, quick enough to avoid the next, (which Nicolas intended to take effect in the same place,) and to return the compliment upon his foe, who had overreached himself in the effort. He then attacked in his turn, and pressed Nicolas so closely, that the latter, by his hard breathing, showed he was considerably perplexed at the rapidity with which he was struck. Still, however, he preserved his caution, and parried all the worst blows aimed at him, contriving in return to deal some hard buffets upon Jacotin's shoulders.

This sort of fighting was not to continue long, for the young man had resolved never to quit the lists with life unless he had first taken that of his father's murderer; and Nicolas well knew



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and beat out one of his eyes, the mangled wretch rolled round upon his face, and cried for mercy.

The provost and his attendants approached, and water was brought by some of them to Jacotin for the purpose of cleansing his eyes, while others tended the dying Mahuot. A leech, who had been brought, pronounced, without hesitation, his opinion that death must speedily ensue from the wounds in his head. The unhappy man, upon hearing this, begged that a priest should be instantly sent for, to whom he might make confession of the sins which burdened his conscience.

At this moment two friars, accompanied by the Archdeacon of Valenciennes, appeared at the barrier, and, informing the provost that they came at the desire of the bishop, requested that Mahuot, adjudged by the issue of the combat to be guilty of the accusation laid to his charge, should be delivered over to them, his life being at the disposal of the bishop.

The provost answered the archdeacon shortly, but civilly, by observing that, although in Valenciennes, and in the duke's absence, the bishop might be considered the liege lord of that city; yet that in Ghent, where the duke administered justice in person, the bishop's power was dormant.

The archdeacon then changed his ground, and begged that he, with the churchmen who accompanied him, might be permitted to receive the

culprit's confession, and to bestow on him such spiritual consolation as his case might require.

"This, too, had been provided for," the provost answered; "and the prior of the Augustine monastery of Ghent had already sent some of his community for the purpose."

The archdeacon and his monks, thus beaten from their purpose, were obliged to retire, and the Augustine friars assumed the charge of the mangled culprit, who was borne with all the care which the nature of his wounds required to the monastery.

When the news of his steward's defeat and probable death were communicated to the bishop, although he assumed an appearance of great regret, he was not really so much afflicted as might have been reasonably expected. Mahuot had for many years been his faithful and indefatigable agent. His zeal had never been known to relax; and it was believed that he possessed the entire confidence of his master, to whom he had become, as was thought, wholly indispensable, for the unhesitating readiness with which he took upon his own shoulders the blame for all those acts of tyranny and extortion, of which he was, in fact, not the cause, but the instrument. For his numerous and valuable services he neither sought nor received any other reward than the immunity which the bishop's protection afforded him against the resentment or revenge of

the persons who might happen to think themselves wronged by him. A pecuniary recompense from his master he would have scorned to receive; for, like all other stewards, he had sufficient opportunities of picking up certain gains —no matter how honestly—which, in the words of modern advertisements, made his "wages no object." Such a servant, then, it would be reasonable to think, must be regretted by the master to whom he had been so invariably faithful and useful; and, without giving the Bishop of Valenciennes credit for any humane virtues, of which he did not possess a particle, those merely selfish feelings in which he abounded ought to have made him lament Mahuot's ill fate. But there are in all systems, domestic as well as political, secret motives, which, if they were once known, would put an end to the surprise which the actions resulting from them occasion; and the bishop had, what he thought, very good reasons for not regretting this event. He knew his steward's utility, but he had begun to fear him. Mahuot was so well acquainted with all his master's secrets, some of which were not of a nature to be revealed, that he could, by disclosing them, have done him great mischief—perhaps even have caused his ruin—for he could have furnished the numerous enemies whom he had created by his haughty and tyrannical behaviour with the proofs of his delinquency. It was this

knowledge, and the fear lest Mahuot should one day or other turn traitor, that made the bishop now look upon his being killed in the light of a relief, and even to congratulate himself upon it. His rejoicing was, however, very short; and no sooner did he learn that Mahuot was in the keeping of the Augustine friars than his fears were renewed with tenfold strength and magnitude. He had made, as he thought, an infallible provision against the possibility of any disclosure which the approach of death might extort from his steward. For this purpose he had sent some of his own creatures to the lists, in order to secure the possession of the steward's person; and had never contemplated that event which had now happened, and which overturned all his plans.

In the first excess of his rage he uttered a thousand imprecations, all very unseemly for a churchman, on the heads of every one whom he fancied to be the cause, in however remote a manner, of his disappointment. Having calmed the fury of his soul by this most comfortable practice, to which he was addicted even upon slight occasions, his natural astuteness suggested to him that it was necessary to take precautions against the worst event that could now befall. He knew that at Ghent he was surrounded by persons who bore him no very good will; and he felt, too, that his power here was considerably

less than it would be at Valenciennes. For these reasons he came to the resolution of departing immediately: he gave directions that all the preparations for setting off should be hastened, and that the greater part of his household should be ready to begin the journey homewards at an early hour of the following morning.

This intelligence was communicated by his orders to the Lady Maud, who heard it with dismay. She feared, with two much reason, that if she quitted Ghent it would be impossible to break the imprisonment in which she was held; and for a moment she regretted that she had not consented to Sir Gui's proposal of flying from the unjust imprisonment in which she was held by the bishop. After a few moments' deliberation she saw there was no means of preserving her freedom but by postponing her departure from Valenciennes, in order that she might thereby obtain an opportunity of appealing personally to the duke, which she unhesitatingly resolved to do. She did not doubt that Sir Gui would be able to effect this point if she could make him acquainted with her situation; but it seemed almost impossible to convey to him the necessary intelligence. She deliberated for some time what was to be done in this extremity, and at length resolved to address herself to old Marguerite, the only person

upon whose assistance she could reckon, who might, she thought, be either persuaded or frightened into the necessary measures.

All the blame of the strangers being introduced into the house had been laid upon the old gouvernante; and, as the sudden appearance of Sir Gui from above stairs, when in his haste he had overturned the bishop, still remained wholly unexplained, poor Marguerite lay under suspicions worse than if the actual extent of her indiscretion had been known. By the bishop's order she had been confined to the suite of chambers appropriated to the Lady Maud, and had been ordered not to quit them until the bishop's further pleasure should be made known to her. The churchman had been so much engaged that he had not yet had time to inquire into the particulars of the mysterious business, and he had resolved to postpone it until he should reach Valenciennes.

Dame Marguerite now sate sobbing and groaning in a corner of the chamber, and praying to all the saints whose names she could recollect to save her from the consequences of the bishop's wrath, which her fears even magnified, and made more terrible than they really were.

"Did you hear the order for our journey to-morrow, Dame Marguerite?" asked the Lady Maud.

"Oh yes, Heaven be praised!" replied the old woman, "and right glad shall I be to escape from this unlucky town."

"Nay, dame," said the lady, "how can you call it unlucky? Did you not tell me, but a day ago, that your fortune had been told here, and that a very happy destiny was promised you?"

"Yes; but that was all the invention of the accursed sorcerer by whom I am brought to this pass, and whose face I wish I had never beheld," replied Marguerite.

"I think you are unjust to the seer," said the lady very gravely: "I have the firmest faith in his predictions, and I am sure nothing can thwart them, unless, indeed, it be your own want of confidence and courage."

"How can I trust or believe in them, my lady," asked the old woman, "when I am too sure that the stories he told me were all lies, fabricated by the rogue to gain admittance to the house—perhaps to rob it?"

"Trust in them or not, as you please, dame," replied the lady with an air of indifference; "it is quite certain that, if we quit Ghent, they never can be fulfilled."

"Why not?" asked Marguerite.

"Why not?" repeated the lady; "I marvel that you should ask. Do you know so little of the bishop as to suppose that he does not reserve you for some very dreadful punishment?"

"Oh, the mercy of Heaven forbid!" ejaculated the old woman, turning pale, and trembling with fear.

"Do not alarm yourself needlessly, dame," said the lady; "you should be under no apprehensions while you remain in this city. Here the power of the bishop is subservient to the laws, and he dare not commit any outrage; but, when we shall be at Valenciennes, then indeed, my poor Marguerite, I shall feel for you."

"Holy Saint Ursula, save me!" cried the old woman, more frightened than before, "what can your ladyship mean? You do not really think that the bishop would punish me any further than by some slight penance for having

so sufficiently frightened that she might do what she would with her. Preserving the calm tone in which she had been talking, she said "There is only one way by which your safety may be provided for, dame; that is, by procuring our stay somewhat longer in Ghent. If this can be managed, I do not despair of effecting my own liberation; and in that case I promise you my first care shall be to extricate you from the clutches of the bishop, who, I sincerely believe, intends to make you feel the whole weight of his vengeance."

"Can we not, then, put off our departure?" said Marguerite; "can you not say you are too ill to travel?"

"The bishop is too wary to be imposed upon by any pretence," replied the lady; "and, if I were even ill in reality, it would not ensure that delay on which alone your safety and mine depend."

"What, then, can be done?" asked the old woman, half wild with fright.

"I know not," replied the lady. "If, indeed," she said, after a pause, "we could by any means convey intimation of our condition to a friend of mine, a knight, who is now attending the court, he could, perhaps, obtain the duke's order to suspend our journey. But that is impossible," she added.

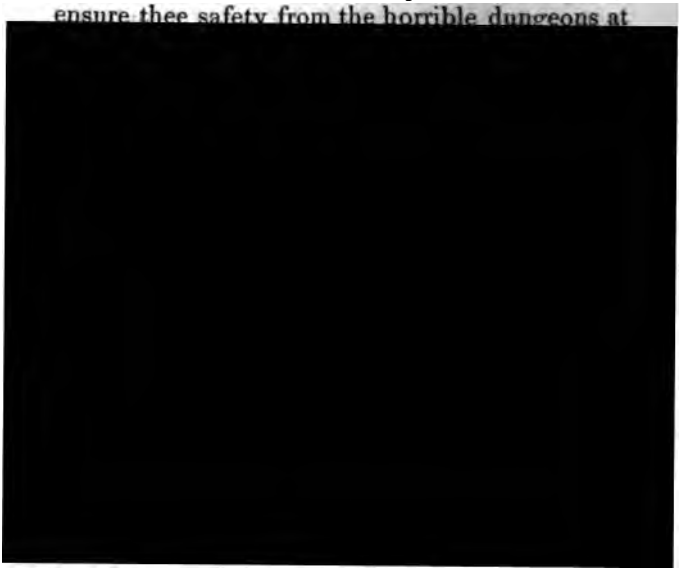
"Oh, no!" said the old woman eagerly; "difficult it is—but not impossible. The horrible

thoughts which you have suggested to me of the punishment that may await me at Valenciennes will give me courage to encounter any thing. Beseech you, my lady, let me try."

"But, even if you had courage," said the Lady Maud, "what opportunity could you find for quitting the house, watched as we are on all sides?"

"I have the key of the little door in the garden-wall still in my possession," cried the old woman exultingly, as she produced it; "and this ensures me a way out."

"Nay, then, dame, if thou hast both the courage and the means to do the errand I will set thee about," said the lady, "I think I may ensure thee safety from the horrible dungeons at



old woman, who was thoroughly convinced of the necessity of dispatch, was now quite well disposed.

Marguerite, wrapping her veil about her head, stole silently and unperceived into the garden. The door of which she had the key was at the end of a long alley, and entirely concealed from view by a circuitous plantation which had been made for that purpose. With a trembling hand she unlocked the door, and quitted the garden.

She had not proceeded many paces when some person approached and accosted her.

"Save you, noble madam!" said this person: "may I ask whither you wend so quickly?"

The old woman drew her veil closer about her head, and pretended not to hear the question; while she trembled in every limb, lest it was some of the bishop's retainers who had seen her quit the garden.

"Beseech you, madam," said the importunate questioner, "to slacken your pace. I would fain conclude the discourse I had begun with you, and which was so unfortunately interrupted on a late occasion."

Dame Marguerite at this looked round, and saw the Disour, or, as she believed, the fortune-teller. Having nothing else to do, he had strolled towards the bishop's house, for the purpose of trying whether he could pick up any intelligence

from the servants which might be useful to Sir Gui. He knew the old woman's figure as he saw her issue from the garden-gate, and had hastened to join her.

"At some more fitting time, good sir," replied Dame Marguerite, (who, although she suspected the seer to be a great knave, thought this was not a convenient opportunity for telling him so, and the more particularly as it occurred to her that she might make him serviceable in her present case) "I will hear the remainder of your spell: now you can do me no service so acceptable as to conduct me to the abode of a knight who is called Sir Gui de Montaudun."

"And I can do none more agreeable to myself," replied the Disour; "for, as he is one of my best and most intimate friends, I shall rejoice in the honour which your visit must confer upon him."

He then conducted the old woman to Sir Gui's dwelling, cajoling and flattering her all the way, for the purpose of keeping in her good graces, and thus, as he thought, securing her influence with the Lady Maud for his friend. Perhaps, if he had known the intent of her errand to Sir Gui, he might not have given himself this trouble; but he would not less gladly have been her guide. He carefully avoided referring any more particularly to the abrupt termination of their last interview, lest he should create in her mind suspicions

which, as he flattered himself, did not at present exist.

On his arrival at Sir Gui's quarters he learnt that the knight was closeted with the Lord Anthony; and, having therefore bestowed the old lady in another chamber, he went to that in which Sir Gui was sitting.

On his knocking at the door he was bidden to enter. He obeyed.

"I crave your pardon a thousand times, gentles," he said; "but my excuse must be the news I bring."

"Thou knave," said the Bastard jesting, "thou shalt have no pardon, but instant punishment; and thy doom shall be to listen to my news before thou tellest thine own;—a heavy penalty for one who loves so well as thou dost the sound of his own tongue."

"Say on, then, my lord," replied the Disour, entering into the whim; "I can endure with marvellous fortitude."

"Know, then, though naughty Disour," said the Bastard, "that the chancellor has examined that barefooted monk, and that reformado jester, whom thou didst in thy sagacity unkennel; and that he says thy patron Sir Gui's legitimacy can be proved by them as clearly as the sun's light; which being done, he will no longer be the Knight, but the Baron, de Montaudun."

"Oh, brave chancellor!" cried the Disour in

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to Sir Gui who the lady was, which information induced him to consent—though still with an affectation of suspecting Lord Anthony—that she should be conducted to the chamber.

"But first," said the Disour, "I stipulate that my lord yonder shall stand behind the hangings. The lady is young, inexperienced, and timid; and the sight of a stranger might too much embarrass her."

"Nay, nay, why all this caution?" said the Bastard, in a conciliating tone; "thou knowest, my good friend, that thou mayest depend upon my discretion. Let me but have one glimpse, only one single look, at the damsel, that I may know whether I ought to congratulate Sir Gui or not. Besides, I can convince thee that it is absolutely necessary for me to see the style of her beauty, else I might shock our friend's feelings by praising blue eyes when the lady has black ones, or cry up her auburn tresses to the heavens when her locks are flaxen. Now, prithee, gentle Disour, as thou wouldest save me from such an indiscretion, let me see the lady."

"I am inf'exible," replied the Disour; "rocks are not firmer than is my resolution. Could I ever forgive myself for exposing a young and innocent beauty to the gaze of a man like your lordship, who, notwithstanding your vows, are mainly to be feared? Ensconce thyself, or I will not produce my treasure."

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this was equally fruitless; and his lordship, flinging the Disour aside, approached Marguerite.

"Fair lady," he said, in a most insinuating tone, "I beseech thee to unveil the beauties which thou hast so cruelly shrouded. Heaven never meant that the gifts which it has so plentifully endowed upon thee should be hidden from the gaze of mortals."

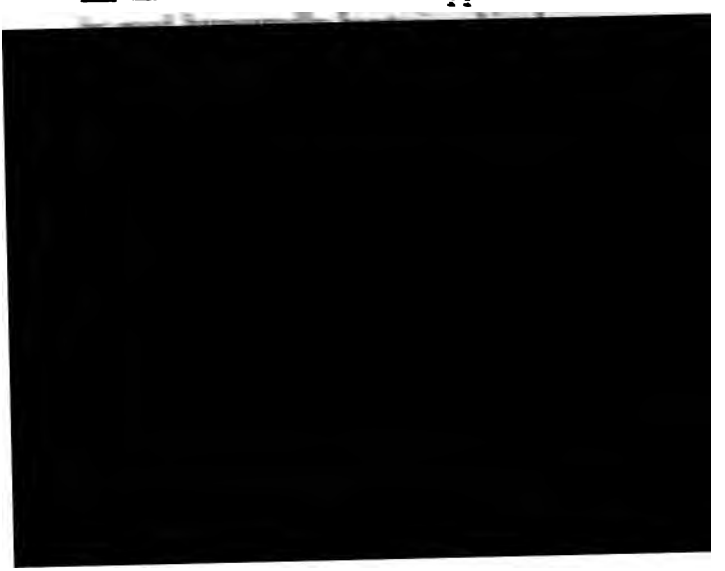
Old Marguerite could not tell what to make of this address. She knew that the gentleman who spoke to her had not seen the beauties he was praising; and she could have known, besides, that all the beauty which Heaven had bestowed on her might be hidden without doing harm to any one. But who is there so wise as to be insensible to flattery? who is there so ugly as to believe that he or she is wholly without charms? Marguerite thought only of the fortune-teller's prediction, and of the glowing anticipations to which it had given rise. The Disour, in the mean time, stood aloof, enjoying to the utmost the importunity of the nobleman and the affected resistance of the old woman.

"Nay," said Lord Anthony at length, "if you still remain inflexible your cruelty must excuse a little gentle force—I must once behold your features;" and he removed, as he spoke, the veil from the old woman's face. One glance was enough—his impetuosity was at once allayed; and, as he looked round, he saw the Disour holding his sides,

an attempt to check a fit of laughter which [illegible]

Fortunately for the safety of all parties, at this moment Sir Gui returned with his letter, which he delivered to Marguerite, at the same time requesting the Prior to escort her safely back again. The latter ushered the old lady out of the chamber immediately; and, having in a whisper informed Sir Gui of the Lord Andrew's adventure, he went back to Marguerite, whom he took home to the bishop's house, which she was so fortunate as to gain without the absence being perceived.

When the Prior had departed, and Sir Gui had answered his friend's disappointment a little



During the festival of the Toison d'Or every day was spent in sports of some kind; and in the evening the noble persons who formed the court, with all their retainers of the rank of gentlemen, were expected to assemble at the duke's banquet. This prince, who was as much distinguished for the courtly ease and polish of his mind and manners in peace as for the energy and skill with which he conducted his warlike enterprises, was very fond of assemblies such as these; and he had the skill, by disencumbering them of a great portion of that ceremony which then commonly attended the entertainments of the nobility, to make them universally agreeable to his guests. On the present occasion the company was disposed of in various parties: the elders were employed in chatting or in playing at tables, or other games then in vogue; the younger members of the company helped on the flight of the night by dance and song.

The duke was seated at the upper end of the hall, playing a game at chess with the chancellor. The Bastard drew near with his friend, Sir Gui. The game had just approached a close; the duke was check-mated.

"It is always thus when I play with a lawyer," said the duke: "you are so cool and calculating, that there is no hope of taking you by surprise. Confess now, my lord, you have thought of nothing but the game since we began to play."

"Nothing is more true," replied the chancellor: "of what would your grace that I should have thought else?"

"See now," cried the duke; "I knew it must be so. I have been thinking of a thousand different things: the fortifications of this city, and the manner in which they may be strengthened, with a multitude of other matters, have been galloping through my brain; and to them, I believe, you are mainly indebted for your victory, my good lord."

The chancellor shook his head. "Well, well, no matter how it was; you did beat me," said the duke, "but not easily. How now, Anthony?" he said, perceiving his son; "what news dost thou bring?"

have done good service, sir, and carved for yourself as fair a fame as any knight whom we call ours. Fortune, the soldier's bride, has yet been coy to you: she is, like some other females, fickle and unreasonable: like them, too, she must be roughly wooed ere she can be won. But, patience, sir! she may yet be yours."

"In the mean time," said Lord Anthony, "if your grace would interpose your good offices, my friend might obtain another bride whom he loves nearly as well, and who is somewhat more kindly disposed towards him than that same Madame Fortune your grace speaks of."

"What an old man's wooing can do for you, Sir Gui," said the duke, "you may reckon upon; but how shall that speed your suit?"

"Sir Gui will not put your grace to such trouble," replied Anthony with affected gravity; "the lady he will woo without your grace's aid: but there is a certain inveterate bishop, the lady's guardian, over whom the exercise of your authority would have an effect very beneficial to my friend's suit." The Bastard then went on to explain to the duke the circumstances of Sir Gui's love for the Lady Maud, the approbation of the late baron, the refusal of the bishop, and his intention to wed the lady to Sir Jacques Lelain.

The duke's indignation, which was always easily moved, was roused at this recital. "So help me, the blessed St. Andrew," cried he, "but I would

rather deal with the soldan, and all his might, than with one such crafty priest as this same bishop! But we must not let so notorious a wrong be done as that he now meditates. Le-haut!" he added: "why, though I know him to be as brave as his own sword, and as honest a man as breathes Heaven's air, he is no more fit to be married than his war-horse. Rest ye content, Sir Gui: we will spoil the bishop's plans, or we shall know the reason."

Sir Gui thanked the duke in the warmest terms that his feelings could prompt for the favorable interest which he displayed.

"My lord," said the duke, turning to the chancellor, "see that the Bishop of Valenciennes be

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the favorable opinion which the duke entertained of him. The night grew late; and at length the duke retired, bidding Sir Gui attend at his court on the following morning, and wishing, as he left him, that his lady-love might soon be his bride.

"That gentleman," said the Bastard, as the duke withdrew, "although he is my father, is as honest and as brave as any in these realms—or in the next, for aught I know; and in war, or in wooing, would make as good a second as man should desire to have. Now, Sir Gui," he added, "let us home to bed, and to-morrow we shall see if we cannot beat this bishop in spite of all his stratagems."

On the following morning the companions repaired to the duke's palace. It was his grace's custom to hold a sort of open court daily, for hearing such applications as might be made to him, and for the dispatch of all public business. This usually lasted until the hour of eleven, when, at the benighted period of which we are speaking, the people were so barbarously ignorant as to dine. The nobles were in the habit of attending here, and were occasionally consulted by the duke in forming his decisions. The ladies of the court also, although they of course took no part in the serious business which was transacted there, were present in considerable numbers, so that the hall of justice in the morn-

ing was often nearly as splendid and crowded as the banquet of the evening.

On the present occasion the court was unusually full. Soon after Lord Anthony and Sir Gui had arrived they saw the bishop enter the hall, accompanied by the Lady Maud. The bishop's usher conducted her to a seat near the duchess, who, accompanied by the ladies of the court, was placed at some distance from the dais, where the duke and the council sate. In this latter place a chair was reserved for the bishop, in which he took his place. The business of the court had already begun.

"My lord bishop," said the duke, "we have waited your coming, because a matter which nearly concerns you has just been urged. It

that city, shall ratify it. How say you then, my lord? have you any reason to offer why the dead man's will should not prevail?"

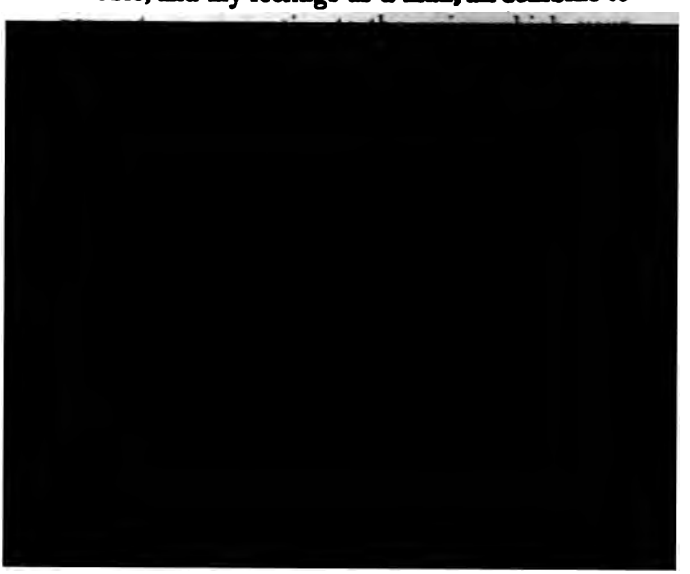
The bishop was too much relieved by the turn which the affair had taken to dispute a point of such comparative insignificance as this; and he therefore replied that he consented to it; not forgetting at the same time to express, in strong terms, the regret which he pretended to feel at having been so much imposed upon by the dead Mahuot as to believe in his innocence. His object in doing this was twofold: first, he wished to conciliate the duke; and, in the next, he thought that, by blackening Mahuot's character, he should protect himself against the inconvenient suspicions to which the discoveries of the steward, if he had made any respecting himself, might give rise.

The duke took the bishop at his word; and, Jacotin being in attendance, he was ordered to do homage in court to the bishop for Mahuot's lands; which he did, and, to the deep, though concealed, mortification of the bishop, was legally constituted the inheritor of the property of the man he had been so fortunate as to kill two days before.

The duke then beckoned to Sir Gui; and, when the latter had drawn near his chair, his grace said, addressing the bishop, "This affair being ended, I have now, in turn, to become a

suitor to your grace, and to pray your consent that the Lady Maud de Montacute may wed with this young soldier," pointing to Sir Gui as he spoke. "You are her guardian, and stand towards her in the place of her natural father. That father, it seems, had approved of their mutual passion; and you, I trust, will not withhold your blessing and consent from them."

"My liege," said the bishop, rising, and assuming a solemn air, "it gives me pain so great that I have not the skill to express it at finding that I cannot comply with your highness's wishes. My sacred office as a minister of our holy religion, my duty as a guardian, my plighted faith as a noble, and my feelings as a man, all combine to



less honorable and courteous. I mean the noble Sir Jacques Lelain, whose feats in arms have so often excited your highness's admiration."

"Why, zounds, man!" cried the duke, forgetting his state, as he was in the habit of doing when he was moved, "you do not mean that Lelain, although as brave and as honest a warrior as ever wore belted brand, is a fit husband for the blooming Lady Maud, of whom he might well be the father."

"He is her suitor, my liege," replied the bishop; "and, to my poor thinking, his years are not so many as to unfit him to be the lady's consort."

"Then you think, my lord bishop, that fifty and nineteen would make a suitable union. Of all the stretching leather in the world," he said, lowering his voice so as only to be heard by those immediately near him, "commend me to a churchman's conscience! But yonder is Lelain himself. Come hither, Jacques; never stand blushing and biting thy thumb like a schoolboy: tell me, art thou hardy enough to wish to take to thyself a young wife? Couldst thou wed thy December to the Lady Maud's May?"

"I know not," said Lelain sullenly, "what your highness means by December: marry, your enemies have found it hot weather with me many a time ere now, and may do so still.

Surely if a man can fight a battle he can wed a [illegible]

"For scaling a castle wall, for sacking a city, or [illegible] deeds in arms, and for drinking when [illegible] done fighting, thy superior cannot be found, and none shall confess thy merits sooner, as none knows them better, than I; but for wedding——Nay, Jacques, look not so grave—I think thou art the most unfit of all the men in Ardenne."

"Your highness may have your jest, and you will, but for all that, I have wooed the maiden; and I should like to see, saving your own royal self, who dare dispute my title to her. For

cool manner in which Lelain spoke of her, and her indignation roused at the insolent tyranny which, under the pretence of his authority as a guardian, the bishop would have exercised over her. These feelings would alone have been sufficient to rouse her to resent the indignity which, as she thought, had been practised towards her; but her love for Sir Gui impelled her to a bolder step, and, mastering, as well as she was able, the rising passion which oppressed her, she advanced from her seat beside the duchess, and threw herself at the duke's feet.

"In the name of that chivalry of which you are the honour and the ornament," she cried, "I conjure you, sire, to save the child of a brave knight and true noble from the indignities which are heaping upon her. Is it fitting," she added—rising as the duke extended his hand to her—"is it fitting that the Lady of Montacute should be thus made a prize, to be staked by a priest, and played for by warriors like a captive foe, or like a noteless and worthless person, whose will has nought to do with the choice? I protest against the authority of the bishop; I renounce his guardianship; and here, once and for all, I place myself under that of your grace, vowing solemnly that nothing but absolute force shall ever again put me in his power. For you, Sir Jacques Lelain," she said, turning to the knight,

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been my father's old and trusty friend, I care not if I confess that I love you as a daughter; but with this you must be content."

Sir Jacques kissed the fair hand which Maud held out to him, and, rising from his knee, retired to his place.

"This I will say to thee, Jacques," said the duke, "that when thou dost counsel thyself thou dost always right; and it is only when thou listenest to the evil rede of others that thou dost commit follies. But come, old friend, I am glad that thou hast done wisely; and, since thou hast quitted thy claim, what says his reverence to my proposal? Shall the youth for whom her father destined this maiden as a bride now have thy consent to wed him?"

"I beseech your grace to pardon me," said the wily churchman, with an hypocritical air and downcast looks, "if my duty and my conscience forbid me to comply with your grace's commands. I cannot, and I dare not, consent to the heiress of Montacute wedding with a man who, whatever may be his qualifications as a warrior, is of fortune so low and poor as the youthful knight whom your grace protects."

"Nay, for his fortune, that surely matters not, good bishop: the barony of Montacute is large enough, and his sword will probably win more to add to it. While I find him no unsuitable match

on this score, I shall look that you give me better reasons for your refusal."

The bishop saw that the duke's tone began to grow more serious; but still, not being a man to give up his point readily, he thought he might postpone the marriage, and gain time, in which he hoped he should be able, by fair or by foul means, wholly to prevent it.

"My liege," he said, "your grace may, if you will, change the laws; for your power is absolute, and, if you think expedient, you can do so. I am but a subject, and my duty is to obey them. By the laws of the County of Hainault, which your highness swore solemnly to maintain, the Lady Maud cannot be married to a man of illegitimate birth; nor can she be married to any one

and twisted his beard about violently—a common practice with him when he was angered or perplexed.

The churchman thought he had made an impression on the duke; and, not doubting that he should now gain his point, he proceeded in an insinuating tone, and with a mortified air, to say, "I call all the saints of heaven to witness that it pains my very heart thus to thwart your grace's expressed wishes; but the preservation of a pure religion, the maintenance of moral virtue and good order, depend upon the observance of such laws. But for that of which I am now the champion, albeit an unworthy one, the scandal of illicit connexions would be spread through the land, the holy ties of marriage disregarded, and the pure streams of noble blood, of which our nation is so justly proud, be mingled with and contaminated by the basest mixtures."

The Bastard of Burgundy, who had no great reverence for the bishop, heard this speech with an indignation which he found it almost impossible to restrain. Gui saw his rising passion, and endeavoured to check him by holding his arm, and whispering in his ear that the time for vengeance would come, and that to notice the insolence of the bishop now would be to give him an advantage.

"Scurvy dog of a priest!" muttered the impetuous Anthony; "if it were not for his frock

I would cram every slanderous lie he has now uttered down his throat with the point of my sword."

The chancellor, who had hitherto taken no part in the conversation, now addressed the bishop. "You say well and wisely, my good lord; the laws of Hainault are as you have laid them down, and the duke is sworn to observe them. If your objection to the marriage of the Lady Maud with Sir Gui is founded upon his illegitimacy, I know no means of removing it"——

"It is so," cried the bishop eagerly, and without waiting to hear the conclusion of the bishop's sentence—"It is so: I expected that your lordship would advocate the observance of so wise and useful a law."

"Room for the witnesses!" shouted the Disour, who had been standing near the chancellor's chair during the whole of the scene, and now made way for the friar to advance.

The monk gave his staff into the hands of one standing near him, and advanced towards the duke's throne, where he knelt. He then rose, and, approaching the chancellor, took an oath which was administered to him to bear true testimony in what he should relate. His face was nearly covered by his cowl, and he stood in such a position that the bishop could not see his features.

"Who are you?" asked the chancellor.

"My name is Anselm: I am a monk, of the order of Carmelites; and my abode was at the monastery of Val de Grace."

The bishop was evidently much discomposed by the appearance of this monk, whom he believed to have been long since dead.

"What do you know touching the legitimacy of Sir Gui, commonly called the Bastard of Montaudun?"

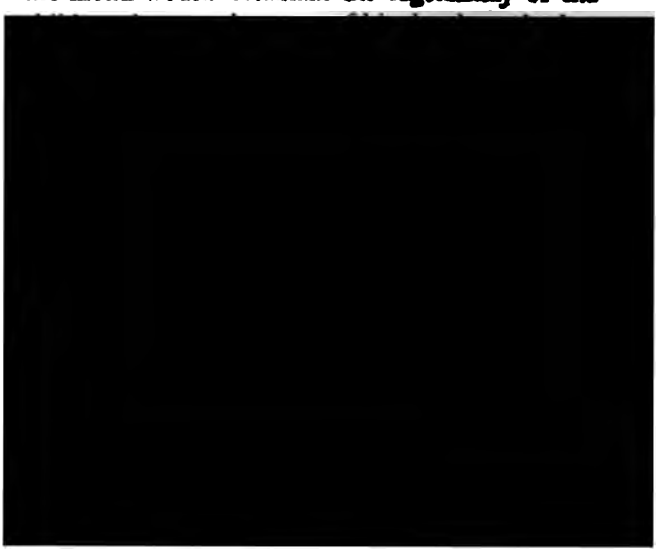
"I know that he is the lawful son of the baron of that name; and that the marriage of his father and of the Lady Adeline Neville was performed by me, in the baron's own chapel, at Montaudun."

"This is an impostor!" my lord duke, cried the bishop. "The Brother Anslem, whom this man thus boldly ventures to represent, was a refrac-

tory member of the church, upon whom, for his manifold offences, a chapter of my diocese passed a sentence of imprisonment. He was confined in the dungeon of the abbey at Valenciennes, and there he died soon after his confinement. Of this I have abundant proof."

"In good time, by your reverence's leave," said the duke coolly: "we shall talk of the dungeons at Valenciennes hereafter. Let the witness proceed."

The monk then detailed, in a simple but striking manner, the events which we have found it necessary, in the course of our narration, to lay before our readers. He described the death of the Baron de Montaudun; his dying injunctions that the monk would establish the legitimacy of his



been provided for him in the monastery, and which he was not allowed to quit for several weeks. At length the bishop's steward, Mahuot, appeared, and proposed to him, as the terms of his liberation, that he should solemnly swear never to disclose what he knew respecting the marriage of the Baron de Montaudun with the Lady Neville, nor to set up the claim of this infant. This the monk without hesitation refused to do; in consequence of which he was taken during the night to a range of vaults, beneath the abbey, where he remained for two years, in the custody of Mahuot. His sufferings and complaints at length moved the heart of his gaoler, who consented to his liberation on condition that he would accompany to the Holy Land a levy then about to march, and would swear not to return to Valenciennes nor its neighbourhood for more than ten years. The reason for this condition was, that the raport which Mahuot was to make to the bishop of the monk's death might not be doubted.

"I confess," continued the monk, "that I was deeply culpable in betraying the trust which had been reposed in me by the Baron de Montaudun; but the pain and grief of imprisonment were too great to be borne. Penance and pilgrimage have, I trust, atoned for this fault. The state of the Holy Land prevented my returning exactly at the expiration of the period which Mahuot had stipulated for; and, when I reached this

country. I found the Lord Montacute dead—the heir of the Baron de Montacute absent, no one knew where—and the Lady Maud in the wardship of the bishop. I laboured incessantly to collect the proofs of the legitimacy of the young heiress, and for this purpose I have traversed many counties without success. At length, as I believe, by the interposition of Providence, every link in the chain of evidence which is necessary for that purpose has been supplied in this city, and within the last two days. My trust will now be discharged, and I shall die in peace."

The recital of the monk had been wholly uninterrupted. It was delivered with that earnestness and simplicity which are the inevitable

" that it is an entire fiction, not of the most ingenious fabrication, advanced by a person of no note nor credit, and wholly unsupported by proof. I trust that to such an accusation your grace will not listen—still less that you will expect me to answer."

" Nay, my lord, it must be answered," said the duke; " I were unfit to be the sovereign of this realm if I could hear charges so grave against your holy character, or a tale so deeply interesting a brave young knight, whom I am proud to call my soldier, without requiring an answer to them."

The bishop did not like the tone of this speech, but his self-possession did not forsake him. " First," he said, " if it please your highness, I should hear upon what proofs this ribald accusation rests. Or," he added, with an ill-suppressed scorn, " fits it that I enter into a contest with the noteless vagabond whose tale is just told ?"

The duke looked indignantly at the proud churchman, and was about to answer; when the chancellor, who had a cooler way of doing things, said, " His grace's request is most reasonable. He should hear all the witnesses; and he will remember that, cheaply as he holds the testimony of the monk, yet, if it shall be confirmed by some other, it cannot be gainsaid. Let the other witness stand forth."

The quondam jester now approached, and,

being sworn to give true testimony, he repeated the story of the murder at Montereau, and the dying declaration of the baron.

... This recital added to the interest which the duke had already felt in favour of Sir Gui. The fate of his own father had made so powerful an impression on him, that whatever was connected with it was always sure to excite his warmest feelings. The mere allusion to the subject at all times affected him; but, now that the narrations given by the monk and the jester had brought distinctly and forcibly before his mind all the particulars of that bloody event, his grief for his father's fate, and his detestation of the traitors who had inflicted it, were renewed with all the freshness and bitterness which belonged to them. He looked upon Sir Gui as the offspring of a man who had lost his life by his fidelity to the late duke, whose heart's blood had mingled with his; and he felt that the son of such a man had claims upon him so strong that they would perhaps have induced him to strain the strict rules of law in his favour. Here, however, the matter was too plain and equitable to need any such aid. The duke saw that the bishop's devices must be defeated, and he knew it was better to let the chancellor proceed in his course, because his acuteness and ingenuity were more likely to match the bishop at his own weapons, than that the duke's blunt passion could be ex-

pected to overcome them. He therefore merely held out his hand to Sir Gui, and warmly pressed that which the knight put into it, at the same time motioning to the chancellor to proceed.

"This then," said the wily old man, who perfectly understood the duke, and turning as he spoke to the bishop, "is the whole of the evidence respecting the legitimacy of the Baron de Montaudun. Does it satisfy your grace on that point?"

"I marvel that your lordship should ask me such a question," replied the bishop, who, by a great effort, maintained his calmness and self-possession. "You are too good a lawyer to receive such evidence, and I trust you do not think so ill of my poor understanding as to suppose that I take one word of it for truth. I have said before, and I repeat, that your supposed monk is an impostor; and I dare him to the proof either that he is the person he represents himself to be, or that his other assertions are true. The brother Anselm was for his sins doomed to a short imprisonment, during which he died. The means of contradicting all that he has said were until very lately in my power; but it is not because I am at this moment without such proof that the unsupported accusations of nameless and suspicious persons shall be allowed to impugn my reputation. That, as I humbly take it, would be against all law, as well as against all justice. Your lordship cannot have failed to observe that

these charges are not brought forward until after the death of Mahuot. That event it is which has encouraged the persons by whom this notable plot has been got up to put it in action, and has afforded the opportunity for venting this tissue of incomprehensible lies. If he were still alive the contradiction would be prompt and certain, and this my enemies know full well. I shall, therefore, under favour of his grace and of your lordship, decline to make any answer to such charges, save by denying them altogether. In this place, and on so sudden an occasion, I might well refuse to do so; but I abandon all the other reasons, which, if I would, I could urge, to show the justice of my request, and rely solely upon that I have mentioned."

"Upon your being without the evidence of Mahuot?" asked the chancellor.

"Exactly so," replied the bishop.

"Then," rejoined the chancellor, with a gravity which was more cutting than the most malicious tones he could have used, "I am rejoiced that I can relieve your lordship from that difficulty. The evidence of Mahuot is not quite lost to you, for I hold in my hand an ample confession, which he dictated, in his expiring moments, before the Prior of the Black Canons in this city. It discloses many curious particulars, all intimately concerning your grace, but not connected with the present question; and it contains also a

copious corroboration of every particular which has been deposed to by the monk and the other witness respecting the legitimacy of the Baron de Montaudun, the imprisonment of the brother Anselm at Valenciennes, and his release, with the conditions on which it was connived at by your grace's deceased servant."

This was the blow which the bishop had most to dread, but from which, by the turn the investigation had taken, he thought he was quite secure. He saw at once that all was lost, and that his policy, deep and subtle as he had before thought it, was counteracted by persons and circumstances he had not calculated upon. Defeated as he was, still his impudence and self-command did not forsake him; a slight paleness which spread over his face, and an involuntary contraction of the muscles about his mouth, were the only outward indications of the feelings which occupied his mind. He drew himself up with as much dignity of manner as he could assume, and looked with a haughty and indifferent glance on the spectators, whose eyes were fixed upon him, and whose countenances expressed that contempt and indignation which the story of his cruelty and treachery was likely to have excited.

A pause ensued, which was broken by the duke's calling to Sir Gui.

"My Lord de Montaudun," he cried—"for, since your legitimate claim to that rank is now

satisfactorily shown to me, and I believe to all present, I bid you henceforward to assume it, and to take the place among our nobles to which it entitles you—As your liege lord, I here give you investiture of the barony late your noble father's, and of which you have been too long deprived."

The baron, Sir Gui no longer, knelt to the duke, who bid him immediately rise, and motioned him to take a place among the peers near his throne.

"And now, my lord bishop," said the duke, "do you still withhold your consent to the baron's marriage with the Lady Maud?"

The bishop knew that matters had now gone too far for any probability of retrieving them. He would willingly have made his peace with the duke by consenting to the proposal, if that had been practicable; but he knew the temper of his sovereign's mind too well to suppose that, after the exposure which had taken place, he could ever hope to remove the injurious impression which it had made against him. He therefore resolved to give no sign of yielding, but to keep up an air of wounded innocence, as the best means of covering his retreat, and of weakening the effect of the disgrace which had fallen on him.

In as calm a tone as he could command he replied: "Your highness's power is supreme over all but my conscience; my life, and aught else that I possess, is at the command of my sovereign; but the duty I owe to Heaven ad-

mits of no compromise, and that bids me still refuse to betray an oath solemnly pledged. Assailed as I am by the foul conspiracies of hidden enemies, I will not do myself so much wrong as to countenance in any way their nefarious attempts. Until I shall have had an opportunity of showing the wickedness and falsehood of those attempts, or until by more competent witnesses this matter shall be proved, I do withhold my consent."

"Nay, then, I know not what shall be done," said the duke. "It were a grievous wrong that the Baron de Montaudun should be deprived of a bride for whom he has waited so long, and whom he has so fairly won. It were the most discourteous thing in the world that the Lady Maud should be disappointed of two suitors in the same day; and that, having dismissed Sir Jacques Lelain, who seems not to take his disgrace much to heart, she should be restrained from marrying the man of her choice. It were also highly unjust to our court, who have been led to expect that the celebration of this noble marriage would be added to the festivities of the solemn ceremony of the Toison d'Or, that they should be disappointed. There is only one way that I can hit upon by which we may hope to overcome this difficulty; and that must depend upon the Lady Maud's acquiescence. The guardian appointed by her noble father refuses his con-

sent. Now, I am sometimes called the father of my people."

"And not without reason," muttered the Lord Anthony, loud enough to be heard, and in a tone which caused a general smile throughout the assembly. The duke looked round with the intention of reproving him; but he could not withstand the arch expression of his son's face, and his own features relaxed into a smile.

"No matter," he said, composing himself as well as he could; "I will, upon this occasion, exert the authority of a parent, and, if the Lady Maud will take my consent instead of the bishop's, there shall be no further obstacle to her union. How say you, lady?" he asked of the blushing Maud, who found it difficult to utter the ready acquiescence which her heart prompted.

"What would your grace have her say?" replied the duchess, who saw and pitied her confusion: "a maiden's blushes speak distinctly enough to all who can read them, and your grace is wont to be tolerably clear-sighted on occasion."

"I am schooled, my good lady," said the duke, as he took from the duchess the hand of the Lady Maud; and then joining it in that of the Baron de Montaudun, who stepped forward to receive it, he said "May you be happy!"

The pair knelt at the feet of the duke, while

a joyful shout rang through the assembly, in which the voice of the Disour was heard above all others. When this had subsided, and silence had been resumed, the duke, assuming an air of severity, and turning to the bishop, said to him—

"My lord, we permit your grace forthwith to depart to Valenciennes; but we think it not right to do this without intimating to you that the confession of your steward, with the other particulars which have this day come to our knowledge, shall be dispatched immediately to Rome. You know best whether you will be able to manifest your innocence; but we would have you told that there are heavy accusations against you—so heavy, that, if but a tithe part of them be true, you are in a perilous case. We are glad that your holy office takes from us the necessity of investigating those accusations, and to his holiness and his council we remit the judgment of a matter in which we cannot trust ourselves to decide. In the mean time we bid you to withdraw from all interference with the possessions both of the Lady Maud, over whom your guardianship now terminates, and of the Baron de Montaudun; and we order that you prepare to account to the latter for the long stewardship you have exercised over his barony. See that these things be done, my lord, for the Baron de Moutaudun will not want friends to enforce his rights, if need be; and, if you fail to obey the

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traditional account of his version of that story, which is still remembered in the house of Montaudun, that I have been able to compile this tale of

The Knight and the Disour.

By the time my grandmother had finished her tale, the supper hour, usually observed with so much punctuality, had passed; and I knew the regularity of the old lady's habits so well, that I saw the story-telling must be finished for the night.

"The conditions of our sport have been performed now by every body present, with one ex-

the compact, let the blame rest upon them alone. I should have taken my turn fairly but for the double stories told by you and my grandmother."

"Now, if any one gives you credit for a single grain of sincerity, notwithstanding your very plausible look," said Elizabeth, "they do not know you so well as I. But I hope you will not be allowed to laugh at us in this manner."

"Why, indeed," said my grandmother, "I think it would be unjust to every one to let Harry Slingsby off so easily; it would, besides, be disagreeable to himself to be dismissed thus ingloriously, without having taken any other part in our sport than that of listening."

"You are too good, my dear grandmother," I replied: "I have no taste for glory; it suits better with the quietness of my temper to remain in the back ground, than to share in a contest for honour amongst such expert story-tellers as are here assembled. I assure you I shall be quite content with the gratification I have already enjoyed in hearing your tales."

"It goes to my heart that he should be allowed to go scot-free," said Harry Beville.

"I have a proposal to make," said Mr. Wharton, "by which he will not altogether escape; and, if it shall be approved of, we shall convince him that we know how to do justice to ourselves as well as to him."

Gentle reader, the result is before you. To your indulgence I commit "My Grandmother's Guests and their Tales," with a very sincere desire that they may prove agreeable to you; and, for myself, I have only to say, that

"I tell the tales as they were told to me."

FINIS.

traditional account of his version of that story, which is still remembered in the house of Montaudun, that I have been able to compile this tale of

The Knight and the Disour.